

THE ROGUE'S MARCH

By JOHN HUBERT GREUSEL





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THE ROGUE'S MARCH



THE ROGUE'S MARCH

Shams and Verities in History and
Biography: Or, Do You Know
a Great Man When You See Him,
and If so, By What Signs?

BY
JOHN HUBERT GREUSEL

Wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn
In short and musty straw?



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THE ROGUE'S MARCH

I

THE MILLSTONES AND THE GRAIN: A WORD WITH THE READER

*Wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn
In short and musty straw?*

¶ What is this book, "The Rogue's March," about? We can tell you in a few words.

Nay, make no grievous error: what we have heretofore lived by, we can live by no longer, historically speaking.

¶ We built for ourselves a beautiful Garden of Lies and called it our Garden of Eden. And we read and believed our pig-trough history, wherein we were representing ourselves as an angel with a revolver in our hand; and we learned to look on it as something good, to go by, and to live by. . . .

¶ Men talk of writing history or biography as tho this were some profound record attainable only thru year-long researches by students all but going blind in dust-laden National archives.

But the simple Old Testament borrows a tremendous advantage over all the books man writes and calls histories;

for the Old Testament is the only history in which man is called, to his face, hypocrite, thief and liar.

Man, reading these plain words, marvels at them, and not wishing to make a confession against himself, replies that such extraordinary utterances "must" be inspired, the judgment of a superman, yea of God.

¶ For man, in all the mountains of history in which he has told his own tale, has never been frank enough to look at himself as he is.

Always in the crises of his affairs does he need a sacrifice to let him, personally, go free, the verdict being "Not Guilty!"

Therefore, when suddenly confronted with himself, somewhat as he is, in all his moral nakedness as revealed by the Great War of 1914, he deplores that he has been driven out of his Garden of Eden.

Which is only another way of saying his Garden of Lies.

§ § §

¶ At this solemn moment, stript of his last rags of historical self-praise, before his eyes the spectacle of some five millions of his brothers around him in death-agonies, this peculiar animal otherwise known as man is now standing naked before his fellow-kind in acknowledged self-distrust of all the old lies by which once he was wont to fool himself.

¶ It cannot longer be concealed that the eye of the eagle sees more than the eye of the groveling toad.

Is he not now tired of being a toad and seeks to be an eagle?

Eenie, meenie, minee, mo. 'Tis all very human. And this is our story: The toad that would be an eagle, the eagle that grovels again till it has its wish and becomes a toad.

¶ The foregoing, too, should be the basis of the new and honest type of history or biography that will take its rise from the close of the Great War of 1914.

In plain words, in the past we have too long been writing history in a way that, in effect, has been a sort of glorified Rogue's March, wherein man has deliberately presented himself as a poseur.

In the hope of helping end this dastardly form of historical and biographical quackery, we rudely sketch herein what to our mind comprise some of the simple, age-old and highly interesting human facts that heretofore have been ignored in writing history or biography, and should henceforth have large place as underlying principles, in work along these lines.

¶ In the old-line average light and pleasant work of fiction known as history or biography, world-old dramas restaged from generation to generation have been brought forward as indications of rising power of good in men's ways: but the wolf's heart is still there, as in the dawn of time.

¶ Over and over again, generation after generation, it is the story of the millstones and the grain.

§ § §

¶ Here, for example, is what a very wise man says of men's ways: "The practice of that which is ethically best involves a course of conduct in all respects opposed to 'success' in the cosmic struggle for existence. In the place of ruthless self-assertion, it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside or treading down all competitors, it requires not merely that the individual shall respect but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence."

¶ These plain words are found on page 82, Huxley's "Evolution." The question now arises, in what sense are these ideas to be understood—as a reality or as a dream of social democracy?

Is it all merely a fantastic mind-picture but little removed from sleep-walking, wherein the impressions on your brain blend more with the illusion than with the realism of life as found; or, we repeat, is it something really bulwarked on life, as actually lived by human beings in this little world we see around us, day by day?

§ § §

¶ There are those that hold that, with minor and negligible modifications, the great moral principles upon which our social fabric rests remain always practically the same. These are the brotherhood-people, to be sure.

Men who reason thus profess merely to be interested and not specially disturbed when surveying human nature in action: regarding the passions of mankind with an indulgent eye; therefore easily disposing of our moral lapses as negligible incidentals in no wise affecting permanently the great moral principles so termed on which our social fabric is said to be buttressed.

¶ But is not this separation, strictly for purposes of history and biography, parallel in essence to the illogical tho lawyer-like contention of Portia: that there is in truth and in fact, gentlemen of the jury, a widely marked distinction between the flesh and the blood? Why not flesh without blood and blood without flesh? Exactly. Why not men's ways without the man, or man without his ways?

Is it true because Portia said it with lady-like grace—was it ever true—and is it true to-day because for his own peculiar lawyer-like ends the National history-monger utilizes the conception of an imaginary line of

demarcation as between the man and his ways, in order to support, let us say, things as they are not?

Has your own private conduct to do with political changes, restorations, revolutions, or has your life, like that of the race, speaking as a whole, been worked out largely thru causes that are not subject to politico-legal classification, in dusty pigeon-holes of National archives? Use your common sense.

§ § §

¶ Rude as it may appear that we should even hint at it, but are you prepared to show that on the whole your individual life shows less failings than marked the lives of the fathers, likewise that your complaints, passions and wishes are more detached from your own heart? This being true or false, as you like it, at any rate, to quote the gifted pen of Francis Hackett, "what objection can you have against permitting the young to know the immense deceptions of the whole elaborate (social) contrivance . . . and to show that under the starched bosom of the world there is a heart very different from the heart that the bosom advertises. We know it, but the man who speaks it is a traitor to the principalities of starch."

§ § §

¶ In this book we have to do with plain and obvious facts, not as "facts," but as confessions of definite phases of human nature that, if they do not mark our progress at least define our limitations as human beings, in the present state of our onward march.

We shall have much to say of battles, pestilence, martyrs, prisoners, meanness and blindness, the shame of things, their smallness, and on the whole the prodigious waste of life, as found.

Sticking these things under your nose, without further

flatteries and stript of the deprecations of professional history-mongers, at least we are in a position no longer to deceive ourselves as to "what" we represent.

¶ Whether as Mr. Hackett sets up the endeavor to put more "truth" into history or biography in the end merely proclaims the critic's errancy of judgment, and makes obvious the critic's individual sentimentalities, softnesses or hardnesses, and all that, does not necessarily disbar thinking men from conjuring up if not a better then at least a more honest social contrivance than that heretofore recorded in books: but that the old-line book-record is anywhere near the authentic life-record can no longer be supported in this solemn hour—and we will tell you why. Scribblers of all nations, like their soldier-brothers, are hiding behind hastily dug trenches and are in mortal terror of the frightful mines exploding unexpectedly round about.

Of a sudden the whole affair tumbling around our ears, we are much in the position of Nydia, the blind girl at Pompeii, endeavoring to flee a catastrophe invisible to her dead eyes yet tremendously real to the mind that shrinks back upon itself, in terror.

¶ The plain fact is that the average man is always concerned in realizing himself in his own way, as against even the conventional flatteries of history in supporting the social contract: hence it is inevitable now and then that beneath the placid surface of our well-ordered social theatricals explosions are constantly taking place. These eruptions are often volcanic in violence: till the wonder is that Society itself does not blow up.

§ § §

¶ In this Republic of ours we do solemnly protest in our official scribblings that we are devoted to diverse forms of idealism, among others these;

Our statesmen proclaim that they live to do good to all mankind, whereas for the spoils of commerce see no inconsistency in supplying hundreds of millions' worth of deadly weapons to European combatants already locked in death-agonies; yet in the next breath protest that our peculiar conduct is to be charged to high ideals for "humanity."

Our religious sects launch the curse against one another and despite their endless piffle about brotherhood, are widely separated by such things as church architecture, likewise openly exhibiting the strangest anomaly between the lives of members and their affirmations of brotherhood.

In short, the present writer has never been able to know whether or not a man was a Christian except by asking him, "Are you a Christian?" not being able to tell otherwise, just as you ask, "Are you a Democrat, or are you a Republican?"

And as for political parties, it is of course conceded that the beginning and the end is to cry out in the marketplace that the victory is for the people, even as the yellow editor asks for support because of idealism and not for dirty dollars. Finally, the leaders of the masses may always be relied on to insist that their sole aim is for the common good.

¶ Each element has thus its day of power only to misuse that power when riding in on the necks of the prostrate: and as ever even the lowest prostitute always makes a show of sham fight for her virtue, not caring to yield too readily when wishing to impress a new lover, likewise old-line history and biography mongers are always to be depended on to play well their dirty part, maintaining at all hazards spurious outward protestations of the brotherhood-cult regardless of the wolf's heart within.

¶ O, the waste of it, and the curse of it; the precious time lost in idle and monstrous flatteries; stereotyping and repeating in this Age of Machinery lie on lie to bolster and sustain a rotten situation: keeping men in bondage because concealing reality and making men satisfied thru a smug complaisancy largely composed of moral wind and gas.

¶ Therefore, let us in "The Rogue's March" have done with great men for awhile, and return to men not great, the little ways of men, that is to say, men as they are: then, if we are not satisfied we will at least no longer deceive ourselves.

§ § §

¶ In this connection it is a pleasure for the present writer, in passing, to lift his hat to an old pal, one who passed twenty years in the U. S. Press Gallery, Franklin H. Hosford.

¶ "Greatness to my mind," says Hosford, "is either a fact or a fiction: excellent men are numerous, good men are of course frequent, but great men seldom come along, and when they are great they are, according to my observation, not always good.

¶ "Many a vain pretender I have seen glorified in the press, many a modest man of great merit utterly escaping mention.

¶ "Why is this? And as for what is called the 'truth' of history, we know that History is notoriously untruthful, when read outside volumes of Divine inspiration."

§ § §

¶ However, there is no need to despair. Real history, if written under a method that will not begin by excluding man from the picture, will be found to have for its basis very simple human elements: comprising such known facts as lust, gluttony, vanity, with now and then a

glimpse of milder qualities that link man's life to another world.

If you have any curiosity in this matter it can be satisfied for ten cents. The complete classification will cost you only one dime, and you will find the list condensed on less than half a page of type in a slim green booklet, read by children of the Roman Catholic church.

In this tiny brochure, you can acquaint yourself with the foundations of all history worthy of the name—as outlined briefly in a literal statement covering the survey of the human passions.

¶ We refer of course to the booklet called the Catechism: and confine our remarks to the summary of the passions, not to other parts dealing with dogma.

We tell you this plainly, that you may educate yourself to respect truth wherever found: for if ever there was a classification of man's ways that has stood and will stand the test of time, that summary is along the line of the eternal passions, as set forth simply, for the child's mind. Numbering these passions may be simple enough, but the application is of course often extremely subtle and baffling; but whether or not you are successful in your efforts to trace the connection, depend upon it the method is correct.

Man and his little ways in round terms of his passions—here all history begins and ends.

We say this stript of all by-play, and wholly in the detached attitude of the judge, summing up the evidence and pointing out the law.

§ § §

¶ Hereafter, when you read history or biography, suppose you sit down and square its validity with an accredited list of the human passions? You will then be in a

position to clear your mind of hypocrisy and flatteries, and will know whether or not you have looked on the picture of a human being, or on some imaginary person or nation.

Not as a churchman but as a man of the world we have drawn on the little list in the child's book, as we pass along. In each instance cited in "The Rogue's March" he who runs may read.

§ § §

¶ Always remember, in all history worth while, the feeble human spirit must have something to take hold of, and to feel. This something is, necessarily, what heretofore historians and biographers seemed banded to suppress—the plain record of human passions, as fundamental facts, comprising thus the real tho overlooked and ignored basis of all human records whatsoever.

§ § §

¶ One last word: It seems strange, does it not, that men should go to so much pains to teach the child a working list of the human passions, only to have the man, himself, pay no attention to the information in writing about life?

This assertion of ours at first blush sounds too broad: but for justification if not for literal reply we refer you, herewith, to the picture of Civilization contained in this "The Rogue's March."

¶ The first great primeval element in human history is hunger: whose iron law reaches all the way from feeding your belly to feeding your mind: and quite naturally, after your belly has been satisfied vanity creeps in to play any one of a thousand related roles, largely hidden from the prying eye, to be sure, but vanity just the same. We therefore begin "The Rogue's March" with the

amiable weakness known as vanity, human elemental stuff that despite all apologists and sleep-walkers of history and biography, still survives, just as it always has: and we now direct your attention to a somewhat startling but very human instance, withal.

II

THE MUMMY'S ELOQUENT SILENCE

¶ This know ye at once: the ironical meaning behind the Mummy's golden rings set with turquoise, makes clear that the human heart does not change, the centuries run their course to oblivion.

¶ In the Egyptian Room of the Metropolitan Museum the visitor sees, among other surprising exhibits, the Mummy of a famous Queen that lived and loved in a dynasty all-powerful three thousand years before the birth of Christ.

Blackened by the flight of centuries, the Mummy still retains a pathetic realism that fascinates while it repels.

¶ Her gruesome hands peacefully folded across her bosom are indeed shriveled to a husk, yet in an astonishing degree make human appeal.

At first glance, these hands resemble the claws of a wild beast more than hands of a human being: yet on closer inspection excite our surprise, reminding us of some quaint motif in black marble, wherein with infinite care the sculptor has indicated the fine grain of the skin, even to the tiny cups of the hairs.

With hideous realism fossilized knuckle-bones, as white as chalk, peep through the black curled flesh, contrasted with which we behold golden rings set with blue-green

turquoise looped loosely around fingers once plump and tapering but now shriveled like the claws of a huge bat.

¶ Recovering from our momentary stupefaction at this unusual sight—Vanity triumphant over Death!—we derive instruction in men's little ways by studying here a classical example of the vicissitudes of human existence, its progress, pride, power, failure, agony, and its death; and discover thus before us some of the strange principles that regulate as well as dominate the little lives of men.

§ § §

¶ In preparing her body for the rock-tomb, the Mummy's finger-nails were stained with warm pigments, her hair exquisitely dressed; her gentle form, now, alas, all too soon to lose its grace and loveliness, was swathed in precious cloths exhaling the odors of the mystic amaranth, that flower of immortality; while, too, still other toilet secrets lent their aid that the Queen might always remain beautiful in her long last sleep.

¶ On the lid of her coffin, renowned artists of that remote era, had carved quaint picture-writings or hieroglyphs, recording the fascinating story of the proud beauty's life; each tiny character was enameled with a finishing polish of plumbago; and even to-day after the flight of centuries the precious gloss still remains undimmed.

These writings have indeed the exquisite detail of fine black lace—appealing, mysterious—loving last tribute of brown hands now long since mouldered into dust.

¶ Last of all, they clasped on the Queen's necklace, also her golden beads of Ophir, and looped in her ears her golden rings; and then near the Mummy's casket in the rock-bound tomb, ladies in waiting placed the Queen's rouge-pots, pastes, powders, and perfumes;—all deemed indispensable the moment the Queen awoke. For her first impulse naturally would be to see herself in the mirror.

¶ Finally, about the casket were assembled many dolls that would in future ages, at the right time spring into life as the Queen's servants. Such was the pious belief of that remote hour, in the twilight of history.

¶ Thus loving friends in those last sad hours left nothing undone that the body according to their generous hope, might continue beautiful indefinitely—though shriveled to a shell.

§ § §

¶ We have herein reverently lifted the veil's edge over thirty centuries of time—just for an instant!—and we discover that the human heart is to-day as it was from the beginning.

How very human it all is.

We respect the thought behind the Mummy's turquoise and gold ornaments, her perfumes, dolls, rouges, paste-pots and her mirror; but is there not a satire, somewhere, when we think of man and his little ways?

¶ With slight changes of background and era could it all not have happened yesterday? Is it not, in short, actually of our own time?

For in spite of all our high brag about the progress shown by our boasted Civilization, that is to say our air-ships, motor-cars, our uses of electricity, and all our other utilities, this Mummy if suddenly awakened from her sleep of centuries would have very much to learn.

But as to the vanities, the human heart is as it always was: she would find nothing new to learn, there.

¶ Still is the story told in these words: fighting, loving, praying.

III

STUDY THE SECRET HISTORY

¶ *The eternal passions begin and end the study of men's ways: forming thus the real interpretation, from Eden down.*

¶ The historian divides his narrative into periods Ancient and Modern, their various ramifications laid down in an orderly manner; the astronomer marks his Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter; and the great Shakespeare records man's life in Seven Ages.

Yet no man has numbered the complications growing out of the eternal passions: tho few in number, the passions have expressions infinite beyond the knowing, therefore beyond comprehensive analysis.

¶ Poets, philosophers and sages, thruout ages have busied themselves in unending endeavors to set forth, with proper shadings, flattering accounts of man and his little ways: yet the world at this late date still awaits a Blackstone of History, an analyzer who will so number and order the eternal passions that henceforth conflicting interpretations of man and his ways may be cleared.

Vain hope you say? Who knows . . . ?

¶ Go out on a crowded corner and watch the crowds swarming by: as far as the story goes the scene spells chaos.

But study men's ways with the veneer of Civilization

stripped off, their shadings from grave to gay, from laughter to tears, and you necessarily conclude that all the episodes of this vain and turbulent life, as primeval as Eden, hark back to three sources, fighting, loving and praying.

These three key-words will, too, form the basis of the new type of historical and biographical writing we purpose to tell you about, a history very strange and very new in this respect: Man will have a place in it, with all his little ways!

¶ One day, perhaps, a new Blackstone will provide the master-key to unlock all the tiny well-nigh invisible trap-doors of the human heart.

And then we will have history written as it should be written—based on human nature in action.

Man's ways will then be found to be as old as the dust under your feet: there is nothing new under the sun.

From Job to Tolstoi nothing else is recorded other than the eternal passions, expressing virtuous or evil desire, as men use these strange words to tell something that is really very simple: we mean, human life.

In various disguises obscure or easily penetrated we find our old friends pride, sloth, envy, covetousness, vanity, lust, and the others; and now and again on rare occasions we run across passions that give wings to man's imagination, gathering around such mystic words as faith and soul, bridging for man the gulf, infinitely wide, that lies between this world and the stars.

§ § §

¶ Whatever the new type of historical writing turns out to be, at least the answer is always the same—that you must know the heart, and that at best it is very old.

Study the secret history of the heart: all else is so much mere preface in the Book of Life.

It is the perpetual play of the passions that gives to life its perennial Spring.

And hence, however old or worn the tale or dulled by repetitions that resound in faint and fainter accents till lost in the misty Past, with its mysterious beginning of things, life is always new to those just coming up.

For each generation, the earth must be rediscovered. It is the old story of the young man's first sweetheart—never such before.

¶ We refer here to one episode, du Barry. Change the name to Smith or Jones, the land from France to America, as you will, making ten thousand combinations of cities, names, dates, years, and social conditions. Still the main-spring of life is always the same.

¶ The gilded du Barry's time has all but run away; and to-day she is in the cart, on the way to the guillotine.

This proud beauty is now leveled to the mean estate of the common grisette. Between the high lights and her downfall, in one form or in another form, du Barry's gayety is a symbol. Goethe used the idea in "Faust," Strindberg in his "Wanderings of Lucky-Per."

It is true that du Barry is this-and-that, as they say, but the end would be not otherwise were she head-milliner, or veritable Joan of Arc; the important point is that nothing is constant save change, nothing of beauty, glory or power but must perish.

¶ There comes the inevitable day when Madam la Comtesse passes forever from the splendors of Versailles, into exile in a ruinous old building with bare walls and wooden seats.

Yet in her time Madam la Comtesse had been veritable queen of France. Come to Paris in a cart, this village girl by the very audacity of her talent for politics and intrigue became King's mistress, and thus vastly exer-

cised her day of glory and power: how well, how ill, is not for us to recall at this solemn hour. Enough to know, a miserable woman's end has come!

Of a sudden, smallpox lays Louis XV low; Madam's protector is gone; and with it in that instant, du Barry's power.

¶ Ah, how terribly she had fought to keep her place, but now in vain.

For years she had put down her enemies; had risen to glory against a high tide of envy; she had shown herself a consummate politician; mistress of card-stacking. But she was destined to take one more ride in the cart. The cart was it seems to begin and to end her career.

¶ As the executioner came forward, she pleaded for just one more moment of life, but he shook his head.

¶ Like a flash of silver the axe gleamed through the air. Her head rolled into the basket.

¶ Soon or late, the inevitable. Nothing is constant save change, nothing of beauty, glory or power, but must perish.

§ § §

¶ Through centuries of tireless repetition—from peasant to king, from queen to daughter of the people—we have love, hate, jealousy, envy, greed—and on and on.

We know by a thousand instances that men still commit murder for jealous love; that since the distant days of Troy, some newly-found fair Helen has been stolen from her surprised husband (she was willing to go), and finally that, long before the days of the Iliad men butchered for gold or lands.

¶ Across the track of centuries, from the time when man was cave-dweller, on down to the time he was sheep-herder, and on to the days when he first tilled land, following on down to the era of soldier-conqueror, and

continuing down to the time he became trader—down till this very latest hour, when man is inventor—to this passing moment, man is as he is.

Not only, is as he is, but is as he was.

¶ We are talking here of the heart in an endeavor to make clear than any history worthy of the name is, after all, but a record of human nature, in action.

¶ Thus we end as we begun—with the everlasting human-nature elements staring us in the face: this pride, this envy, this greed, this jealousy, this love of gold, this wolf's heart, with here and there the few softer qualities that men applaud because of very rarity.

For you to know man as he is—should that ever be your vain and egotistical hope!—at least the way is as clear before you as the path to destruction, that broad boulevard leading straight ahead.

¶ The good sword gathers rust, the knight's bones, no man knows their last resting place, but by the measure of vanity all things human are still reckoned, unto the going down of the sun.

Do not let us deceive ourselves. Self-deception is the one great evil. It makes real progress all the more difficult.

¶ The great tomb-builder, Time (as Byron calls Father Time), keeps up his century-old work, returning races and rulers to the common dust.

For empires rise, flourish and decay, kings, cutthroats, sages, poets and mendicants live their brief hour and are forgotten; the ancient abbey at last crumbles to ruin and under the broken arches the bat finds her lair and the homeless human wretch crawls to seek shelter from the storm.

Infinitely-slow attritions of time year by year take an almost imperceptible toll of dust from the hard stones;

frost cracks the rock, rain enters the crevices which at last become fissures down to the heart of the stone: and thus even seemingly everlasting granite boulders dissolve and are known no more. Then the flying sands, after centuries of ceaseless and cunning labor spread the shroud: till the traveler of that distant day does not even pause a moment to study the spot as he passes over the ruins of the majestic temple, for all record of it has passed from this earth.

§ § §

¶ And still is the human story told in these three words: fighting, loving, praying.

Man will remain man, for ever, the mental attitudes of all historians to the contrary notwithstanding.

The new type of biographer and historian, therefore, should occupy himself as far as possible in studying the secret story of the human heart.

All else is so much mere detail in the Book of Life.

IV

FAGOTS OF JOAN STILL BLAZE

¶ *Behold now, rising in ghostly vision out of the dim Past, this Witch that become a Saint: and reflect in your little brain, as before you on the screen appears the trembling and uncertain outlines of her pathetic face, twisted by fire, whether after all we should write History by putting man in, or by leaving him out . . . ?*

¶ But first get through your mind a fact that heretofore all History has been banded to suppress: the rawest truth about man is his judgment of his brother. Where he should whiten, he befouls, and where he should believe, he scoffs.

We hear a frightful din, these days of millions of murders. The bleat, blab and cackle is about man's "manifest destiny," as recorded by historians. But do we arrive at this conclusion by putting man in the history-thing, or by leaving him out?

¶ Used from childhood to think of the "other man" largely from the way that man's conduct touches our personal comfort or profit, we find ourselves separated from our fellow-kind by such things as food, drink, houses, clothing, and churches.

No; we are not talking about Europe, but about this Republic of ours, wherein we do daily offer up many

official utterances of righteousness, accompanied by pious protests of equality and brotherhood, sentiments to which we burn perpetual incense.

¶ There has always been much difficulty in trying to look on mankind "as a unit." Hence, it has been easier and at the same time more flattering to write what we call our history by leaving man out, instead of putting him where he belongs. . . .

¶ Man was man long before he was politician, preacher or lawyer; and will remain man long after the race of politicians, preachers and law-givers has perished from this earth.

Ideals of social justice as between Nations, supply abundant materials for July 4th or July 14th celebrations, but the enthusiasm dies before the cold grey dawn of the day after.

Do we really, at heart, believe in the Brotherhood, over which we waste so much ink, preach so many sermons, and enact so many laws?

We herald the theory from the housetops, shout it thru megaphones; in short, we will do everything except live it in our daily lives.

§ § §

¶ Even in those days men shook their heads solemnly, and thanked Heaven that they were not like Joan, the lean witch.

Yes, she is a witch, of course she is: and good riddance to her.

What, she saved France from the English . . . ?

Why, man, that woman is a witch I tell you; a vile witch, a she-devil; and you would better keep away or she'll burn you.

¶ They piled the fagots high and her life yielded to the sacrifice of fire: aye, a death as base and vile as ever

Truth suffered in a world forever bringing Truth to the scaffold or to the stake.

The gruesome spectacle hadn't even the merit of novelty: for witch-burning was not half as sensational as feeding Christians to the lions. Whatever Joan may have been, at least she was no "Christian." Don't you see, she was only a "nominal" Christian.

It seems there's a stiff difference, somewhere; for in 1914, the point was likewise raised as between real and nominal Christians, in the prodigious European struggle. We are quite sure in this Republic of ours, that no Christians were guilty of such acts as our historians in the past have usually suppressed.

So, likewise in Joan's day.

§ § §

¶ Years have a way of passing, one, ten, one hundred, and on and on, no matter what man does to his brother.

And by and by, his brother's time comes, tho often enough so long-deferred that brother has fallen asleep on the brown bosom of Mother Nature: the poor heart no longer aches, the tears are dried forever, no sound can reach him more.

All that remains is the empty echo of a name.

Another generation now desires to go on record that, in other years a great wrong was done.

¶ And thus it eventually chanced for Joan: chanced in the inevitable leveling of Time: evil passions gone: men seeing more clearly because no longer blind to the fact that all flesh is of the Brotherhood.

The grass has grown over her grave ever so long. Let us think: well, upwards of five hundred years; but at last the clock struck the hour for her.

¶ At St. Peter's, April 18, 1909, before 45,000 French pilgrims, the beatification of Joan took place.

To-day, I have been studying a celebrated French artist's spirited record of the impressive scene.

Immense paintings over the altar depict the French maid's heroic sacrifices; and Joan's life-sized effigy is there: all veiled, however, awaiting the dramatic moment in the Mass.

¶ The ceremony began by the reading of the Brief; . . . and at the final word the veils floated away, seemingly vanishing in a miraculous sea of light . . . the immense altar star-gemmed with innumerable lights . . . and at the psychological moment Joan herself appeared there, so it seemed, against the background of celestial diamonds.

The bells pealed, the massed choirs intoned the TeDeum . . . a whole city was at prayer.

Overcome by religious ecstasies, the 45,000 French pilgrims, swept off their feet by the zeal for Joan's presence, of one accord burst into frantic cheers . . . which, however, were immediately suppressed.

§ § §

¶ Thus closed one more episode in the century-deferred drama summarizing the predestined progress of the Maid of Orleans toward ultimate canonization.

We say predestined . . . and we mean exactly that. However, not predestined in any dogmatic or creedal sense, nor yet predestined thru the so-called "mysterious outworkings" of Providence . . . but predestined thru the inevitable littleness of man, himself.

¶ For the brand of Cain on man's brow is not there because he killed his brother, but because often enough 500 years or more must roll away before he is even aware that he has transgressed. In spite of man's late retrievals, of past wrongs, he goes on century after century dyeing his hands with the blood of one ideal after the other. This

marks in him a certain innate hypocrisy that up to the passing moment in world-life, our philosophers and our historians, in their scribblings, have not dared to face. The doom of it, the curse of it, the satire of it is found in the unavailing substitution of words for deeds.

¶ Thus, in the far-off years that no man is to know, and of which no man is to care, it is solemnly decreed that the wrong is now righted; and the curious fact to be noted is that often centuries elapse before man is prepared to bow his brazen brow before the ruin he spread. A crust for Joan in life would far outweigh the golden crown man would, some centuries later, press down on the grinning skull.

¶ The world will yet see the Alsatian village maid, Jean le Purselle, who yielded her life to the sacrifice of fire, kindled by mad-men, become in turn Queen of the Church, or saint as they say. Also, from witch to saint in secular history-mongering.

¶ Did I say yielded her life, victim to fagots lit by bigots, or mere "nominal" Christians?

What is called history, as written by the human animal, at all times reserves the right to misunderstand our brother, and to make restitution, nobody knows when, if ever.

And on your smaller stage, you too, no doubt, may one day be idealized beyond the knowing, you and your little breed, little as you are.

§ § §

¶ Well, what was she then? Even as you or I: neither witch nor saint, but only a woman more sinned against than sinning; living and dying under extraordinary circumstances . . . till at last she has indeed become a myth, as must necessarily be under the ingenious practices of man, the myth-monger.

¶ It could not well be otherwise. However, the time comes when the frightful wrong, done her by the ordeal of fire, demands in itself, protest, even tho protest is no longer worth while. . . . The human animal may always be relied upon to assume excessively pious attitudes, following deeds of blood.

And finally, men fell to telling folk-lore about her—just as on your smaller stage you idealize beyond the knowing some of our Americans now dead and gone.

¶ Thus time and chance always have the last reckless roll of the Dice of Destiny, and where the cubes will tumble, or what deuces or aces they will turn up, no man knows to this hour.

Joan's story affords a classical instance of man's cruelty and blindness; likewise of man's enormous egotism in thinking centuries later to right the Past by ceremonials, written, spoken or enacted.

We repeat, the brand of Cain is found in this: that man murders and knows it not for hundreds of years.

Then, he rolls up his eyes, sniffs a bit and solemnly protests that all's well with our race because of the Man that died on the Cross: and die on the Cross He did, but at the time no human being seemed to know or care. And do we know or care, even to-day?

¶ Hence, this amazing spectacle: Joan in time is no longer a she-devil. The human elements lose their native identity entirely, in belated efforts of history-mongers to blot out the Past.

For the Past not only fades like a dream, but the Past is indeed a strange dream: and men and women of times past, as reported hundreds of years later, in what man terms "history," are good or bad beyond all human beings now alive: till men become demons or demi-gods.

¶ Whose story are we to believe?

V

CORONATIONS AND CRUCIFIXIONS

¶ *Is this, then, the peculiar sign of fitness for immortal renown, as measured by mankind: that in the flesh you did walk this world friendless and unknown, a Hero of Defeat: aye, that dogs barked at your rags taking you for a pauper, tho you were prince: and finally, that circumstances forced you to make a mock and a commodity of your art, in order to please the saloon-keepers of Holland . . . ?*

¶ Let us see more of this history-thing, as writ, whether indeed the practice has been to put man in, or to keep man out of the page; and more especially whether the time is not ripe for man to tell the stark truth about himself?

¶ Whole libraries have been lavished on the glories of Rembrandt, yet in his life-time there was scarcely the scratch of a pen in his behalf.

Likewise, Nietzsche, likewise Lincoln . . . likewise Balzac, likewise Shakespeare . . . likewise Columbus . . . also, hundreds of others.

Nor should we forget the case of Socrates and Christ. . . .

¶ However, believe it or not, history-mongers have amply provided a commodity known as immortality, otherwise the irony of fame after death.

How well does this speak for history, or is this history-thing merely an after-thought, read into the record by men who knew neither the actors, the immediate scenes, nor the actual conditions?

¶ One of the peculiarities of historical and biographical writing: that the longer a man is dead, the more is "known" of him: altho in his years of flesh and blood he may have passed thru like a ghost. Recall in this connection the vast diligence on the topic "Shakespeare": for Shakespeare, even for biographical purposes, is no longer classed as a human being, but instead is regarded largely as "topic." . . . Whole libraries to prove, whatever you wish to prove, forsooth. That's fair, isn't it? So runs this world away.

¶ Also, still another foundation-stone in historical and biographical method: things "too near" must be set aside for years, at least till all the actors in the drama are gone; their mouths stopped by death, their ears and eyes rotted away, their hearts a lump of dust.

Welcome then your historical hero: make of him what you will, without fear of contradiction. Who cares?

§ § §

¶ In the whirly-gig of history, crucifixions often become coronations and *vice versa*. Squalid neglect during a man's life is usually regarded as a likely sign of "mysterious" preparation for the higher historical destiny; even nailing a Man to a Cross is interpreted as helpful to those who are to come after . . . and therefore such episodes "must" be important to the man himself!

¶ Worthy material for history!

¶ In short, if the historical character were neglected or forgotten by his own so short-sighted time, the explanation is that the "point of view" was not right, but later the forgotten man becomes a demi-god.

Altho this may not be a credit to our intelligence as human animals, at least it is helpful to us. "Because," we are informed, "history is philosophy teaching by examples." ¶ For a moment let us believe that this famous definition is founded on other than quicksand: and therefore let us confine our momentary gaze to a pathetic figure, Rembrandt. There are scores of others, but in this history-thing, the case of Rembrandt will suffice; for it will show whither we are led in this business of historical fame, after death.

§ § §

¶ With all due respect for this historical incense-burning for the "preëminent glory of Dutch art" as expressed in the "Night Watch," it is questionable whether Rembrandt's generation knew or cared a fig. The man himself rounded out his career chalking cartoons on the sidewalk.

To-day, some hundreds of years after Rembrandt's death, our library shelves are freighted with history-things on the "Night Watch": its mystery, its witchery, its wonder, its profundity, its demi-god qualities. The "tone," especially, is dwelt on as well-nigh a miracle, whereas in plain fact in this respect the artist was not the Dutchman, but Father Time.

¶ To-day, when the name Rembrandt is mentioned it must be spoken with uplifted eyes: you must lower your voice, for he is forsooth the peculiar "glory" of Dutch art. Yet we can imagine, should a murmur of this over-praise penetrate the silence of his tomb, his fishy eyes seeing vacantly after some centuries of blindness, his dulled sense of hearing once more catching an echo from the world of living men, this lonesome corpse, we repeat, for the moment a man again, would not know himself, nor yet the peculiar after-glory that enshrines his name.

He himself of all mortals would be the most surprised, and would exclaim: "Can this be me? Or is it some new form of mockery, now that the world has had time to think up new punishments? Let me fall asleep again: for it is all a terrifying dream, even more hideous than were my closing days on earth."

¶ Alas, it is too true: the man, Rembrandt, has been merged into the "topic," Rembrandt; and being now purely impersonal we make such shift as pleases us in our history-thing.

¶ Therefore, the man Rembrandt could not grasp our high-flown modern mockeries that pass for appreciation: for the simple reason that there was no such man as we amplify in our exercises in historical imagination.

¶ However, even this historical absurdity is of value, for it exposes our pet history-thing in a new light. A study of the psychology behind our waxen-image Rembrandt enables us to learn a thing or two of the littleness of men's ways; and we grasp likewise the importance of writing history—by leaving the man out!

¶ Off-hand, the present writer knows no more pathetic figure (no more mysterious figure), than this self-same artist-no-artist, as you will, unless it be the Thief dying on the Cross: for the principle of historical judgment is parallel.

Which is to say: Rembrandt's after-death fame and the Thief's after-death fame find fixed places in the history-thing, side by side.

In the case of the Thief, this miserable creature, this pathetic human life, is now interpreted to mean something (we know not what) that makes for the perpetual after-glory of mankind; calling this Thief's end sublime, yet in life denouncing him as a thief.

If you can leap the logical gulf and still retain your

self-respect, you are a worthy disciple of the history-thing, as writ.

§ § §

¶ Before Rembrandt's death, frost fell on his excellent reputation as an historical painter; he had had his brief acclaim, likewise his gold coins for his work: but all this after-cackle, all this brazen-trumpetry, this nauseating over-praise about the "Night Watch," these mystical meanings as to the man's life and the man's artistic intuitions, as expressed in the familiar phrases of art-mongers and history mongers: this national self-hypnotism, dazzling our minds like some bright ball that puzzles us and leads us captive, is a self-constructed situation laboriously built-up.

¶ So much for your history-thing, wherein we substitute a "topic" for flesh and blood.

It might as well be a veritable Rogue's March that we are recording . . . for the distinction between the Rogue's March and history as recorded is not so much as the width of a sheet of paper.

¶ The great work of the future will be, in this field, to write history by putting man in the pages; and we insist on his right to be there, yes, with all his crudities, his blood-lusts and his blood-taints: for only by so doing will we be able to look ourselves in the eye and decide whether we are pleased with the picture. Heretofore, we have been pampering and flattering ourselves to death, always setting up that we are mightily concerned about our relations to our brother: but Winter is coming on, and what stored grain is there in the barn?

Have our over-inflated lying accounts of ourselves, in this history-thing, really done us any good? Do we know ourselves as we are, as individuals, or as nations?

Then why so much care that facts may be censored?

¶ The critics tell us that Rembrandt is a great churchman in disguise, whose artistic ideal was essentially religious; others, that he aimed to be the supreme psychologist; others, the master-craftsman; others, the inspired preacher; and still others read into the "topic" Rembrandt all manner of god-like virtues: whereby we bolster up our conception of a great man.

¶ Do not deceive yourself! While you and I rave over great men, it is a question whether we know a great man when we see him; and if so, by what signs?

¶ Heroes of defeat, one and all, these Immortals, their lives an indictment of man's absurd judgments of his brother; till at last the practice is after some centuries of neglect to rush to the other extreme and to cover the stone with laurel wreaths, not forgetting mourning cards bearing carefully penned mottoes of affectionate historical regard.

§ § §

¶ In Rembrandt's case the plain fact seems to be that taste in paint-daubing had changed; and the old Jew-heads and Jew-figures, counting their gold coins, those vivid portraits from the ghetto, done in Rembrandt's bold style, were now to fall from favor; to be replaced by a smooth microscopic method very pleasing to the fickle public of Rembrandt's later years.

Hence the old man was forgotten: and our old fool or our old master (as you will), rounded out his career scratching cartoons at the curb for a drink and a snack.

¶ For men must warm their bellies three times a day, with food and drink, but their minds need only such nourishment as the chalked-cartoon at the curb. To-day, after some centuries, he is termed the "preëminent glory of Dutch art," this self-same lonesome old man who prostituted his powers for a pot. Were they right when they

left him there, or are we in our turn fanatical when we name him Immortal?

¶ Who knows or cares . . . ? It should be, sir, sufficient to know that what this Earth demands is settled order ; and quite naturally she has standardized her methods of historical and biographical writing. Sir, why not?

VI

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED "GREAT"?

¶ *The barking of a dog, the swelling of a brook, the changing of the wind—such are some of the frail tools of destiny! How great men are brought forward.*

¶ It has been shown, time and time again, that accident and opportunity have had much to do with bringing forward "our greatest men," as they are usually called in the history-scribbles.

Yes, even Death is an important helper: for mark you this, that on the ladder of life, right behind you is always the man coming up, crowding for your place.

If he does not actually pass you by, in the scramble, he may decide that no harm will be done if he knocks you off.

Do not take this too seriously. Brush the dust off your coat, mend your bruises as best you may, and thank Heaven that no bones were broken.

Console yourself with the reflection that in turn the bully that beat you to the top of the wall will soon lose his place. In the eternal conflict of defenders and besiegers, a spear will pierce his body, bringing him tumbling into the moat below.

It matters little the means: the end is inevitable.

¶ Such is the human animal, at play.

¶ “Reputation,” says Albert de Montbiliard, son of the Shiek of Sahara and my personal friend, “reputation has often come to mortal on blind chance; in this connection recall that the date seed dropped from the bill of a flying dove finds lodgment in a fertile spot; the lucky kernel after a time becomes a tiny green sprout, and in the fullness of the years flourishes for another generation as the mighty monarch of the oasis, admired by all.”

§ § §

¶ Two notable generals of our Civil War, Grant and Sherman, were in their earlier career so disgusted with the military career and its seemingly hopeless chance for advance in times of peace, that they resigned from the service; but later they rose to fame, thru the accident of the great Rebellion. The coming of the war, by the way, was due to circumstances with which neither Grant nor Sherman had only the remotest personal connection.

Had not the interminable debates of Abolitionists stirred up the final strife, Grant might have continued a tanner, Sherman a schoolmaster, to the bitter end.

¶ Therefore, we repeat, in estimating “what” a man represents, who is to decide? Out of all the seeds in his Bag of Life, just which were the ones that, scattered widely, did indeed take root: also, tell me likewise which of the innumerable fair seeds died of the cut-worm, the crow, or perished in the starved soil . . . ?

¶ We think we know, but it is only another form of our conceit. I have known men rise in life to greatness, as the history-mongers reckon, thru so simple an opportunity as comes by an unexpected fall of rain. Remember, had it not rained the night before, at Waterloo, the cannon would not have stalled in muddy and impassible roads; and now enters that great man, Wellington.

I have numerous other instances in mind, such as the changing of the wind, the barking of a dog, the slipping of a horse, yes, the actual mis-reading of a message. And to this hour, the photo-play director utilizes exactly these, and others, in working out life-stories on the screen.

¶ These caprices, as we call them, coming at a moment when their far-reaching importance was not clear, in turn intermeshed with other vital circumstances no man could read or know at the time, but ended by bringing forth still another great reputation.

¶ Or, taking the reverse side, it is not inconceivable that the coward has more than once been acclaimed a notable hero, the sinner a saint, the seducer the guardian of woman's virtue, the traitor a genuine patriot.

¶ Why not . . . ?

¶ For it is the common practice of mankind to place little men in high and commanding positions, for the time being turning aside the efficient or capable. The rarest talent of all is to recognize a good man when you see him: and the one black indictment of the cheap and nasty money-success is to say simply, "He never helped any other man to rise."

§ § §

¶ Not many years ago, Gen. Wm. Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was repeatedly rotten-egged in the streets of London.

Yet he lived to be reverently referred to as "England's Grand Old Man," and in his travels was the guest of kings.

¶ Were they right, or are we wrong?

¶ Carlyle hawked, "Sartor Resartus," only to place it in a second-rate magazine.

¶ Were they right, or are we wrong?

¶ Henry George's message, "Progress and Poverty," composed under depressing conditions, was offered here and there, but no editor or publisher saw any merit.

A sympathetic fellow-printer put it in type, and John Russell Young peddled a few copies in London. "I tried to throw them away," writes Young, "but at last, through unexpected sources the great work was recognized, and soon followed 60,000 copies a year."

¶ Were they right, or are we wrong?

§ § §

¶ Old examples are wholly as good as those under your nose. Recall then that "Paradise Lost" brought Milton five pounds; and put yourself on the defensive to explain the stupidity of the wise.

¶ Wordsworth confessed to Matthew Arnold, "My dear Arnold you talk of the peculiar glory of the poetic art, as exemplified by the support of the British; but let me whisper something in your ear. For years past, sir, my poetry has never brought me enough to pay for my shoe-laces."

¶ Nor should we, while speaking of the satire of success, fail to recall that "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in spite of its world-wide fame in one language after the other (English, German, Chinese, and we know not what), still was originally absolutely refused by publisher after publisher.

No white American at that time recognized any merit in the story or its telling. Decidedly, however, this narrative had a profound impression, hastening the Rebellion.

So much for our human blindness in reading the future, or in knowing a great woman writer when she was actually before our noses.

¶ We also have it from his own record that Hawthorne,

now esteemed the blue-white diamond in our collection of American literary gems, "was for years the obscurest literary man in America. There is no market for my wares," he added.

¶ Thoreau, another great American literary idol, was no exception to the rule of our ignorance of human values. A thousand copies of his "Week On the Concord and Merrimac Rivers" were struck off by his publisher. After a year, the author received word that his work would not sell, and that seven hundred and six copies were occupying cellar-room wanted for other use.

¶ Accordingly, they were transported from Boston to Concord. The work had gone forth in its nakedness and now returned in fine clothing of calico and leather, back to the old homestead, as so many poor unfortunates who have failed in the struggle of life.

¶ Thoreau gave them kindly though sorrowful welcome. He laid them on his back and carried them "up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that which they traced their origin."

¶ "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes," he said with grim humor, "over seven hundred of which I wrote myself."

§ § §

¶ Man, ignorant and innocent in judging his fellow, tries to fortify himself by freely using labels.

¶ "Is he a college man?" "Who was his mother?" "What Church does he belong to?" "What is his political party?"

¶ Somehow, after Edwin Arnold said that Joaquin Miller and Edgar Allen Poe were America's greatest poets, somehow, that very statement made a difference, and somehow people began to see where they were in darkness before,

¶ Why was this?

¶ Somehow, many years after Goodyear invented the rubber process, which has done so much to help mankind to larger comfort, safety of life and limb and utilities unnumbered, somehow then and only then did the idea dawn that Goodyear, the former fool, should have a magnificent monument, as a benefactor of his race. It need scarcely be added that Goodyear, at this time was dead and passed all need of praise. In life, when he asked for bread, they said he was daffy.

¶ Why was this?

¶ Somehow, after LaFollette had for years been called a bigot and a fool, a man not to be trusted, somehow it came to pass that the things he preached on the floor of the Senate (and usually in the good old days received there as an impertinence), were later welcomed as bringing in a new day.

§ § §

¶ The irony of man's judgment of his fellow mortal: who is to decide "what" you represent, or having decided may not, the following moment, change his mind and decide in still another way.

So wearisome is the recital, so dull, so stupid, that the judgment of half the race on the other half may well justify the ironical phrase used by Balzac in describing his serious life-work, "The Comedy of Human Life."

¶ We pass in silence that classical instance of man's blundering stupidity in estimating human values, the case of Columbus.

They called him "Mad Man."

They put him in a dungeon and forgot him.

To Civilization's shame, the very place of this heroic sufferer's sepulchre is to this hour unknown, despite various spurious allegations of fact, marked by piles

of masonry scattered from the Windward Islands to Old Spain.

Mankind, in the great navigator's day, regarded Columbus's work as not of sufficient importance to do him the mean honor even of preserving his dust and marking the spot in a grudging cranny in a wall . . . !

¶ Why was this?

Have done with your laborious explanations. Consider instead the brute fact of human brag contrasted with human blindness.

How times change, how man's view of his brother change with the times. To-day Columbus's fame is forever fixed. The crucifixion of the cell has given to the coronation of the historian. Too late—his heart is dust!

¶ So much for the worth of hypocrisies of history, set up to cover our ignorance of human values.

We simply do not know a good man when he is right before our eyes: and our pretense to the contrary is merely a preachment inspired by pride of intellect.

The difference between a wise man and a fool? Scarcely greater than the width of your hand!

VII

LIFE'S AMAZING IRONY

¶ Before the new monument a new generation, blind to the mockery of it all, submissively kneels in worship. Such is life's amazing irony.

¶ Now that we are talking about great strength and great weakness it is well to say something of the vague word, "great." No man is wise enough to offer a comprehensive definition of "greatness."

¶ A man must have strong character to face the blows of fate. The world is so selfish that it does not know who is trying to help along.

¶ Does the world know a great man when it sees him, and if so, pray by what signs?

Blackstock, the American Corot, driven insane by poverty, passed years in an asylum; Keats, whose fair fame is fixed forever more, yet at twenty-six died victim to hunger; America first learned of Poe second-hand, Germany and England pointing the way; Whitman had to print his own books, even to setting the type; Hawthorne eked out a living doing political odd-jobs; Meredith starved for many a year on oatmeal, and was over sixty before England knew his great mind; Matthew Arnold wrote some of his finest work on scraps of paper as he traveled around Britain on railroad trains, and nobody knew or cared for many years; Goldsmith had to be

rescued from a debtors' prison, and was dust before England awoke to his genius; Johnson, to pay his mother's funeral expenses, sat up all night writing "Rasselas"; Schiller, hunted like a rat from hole to hole, dared to slip out only after dark to nibble cheese; Mozart was buried in a pauper's grave; Beethoven had nothing but his art to save him from suicide at his country's ingratitude and neglect; Schubert, starving cheerfully, was helped by one friend who paid for pens and paper, another who contributed the room-rent, still another who sent cast-off clothes; Wagner, long an exile from Germany, his art scoffed at and held valueless, is to-day acclaimed the peculiar wonder of German musical genius. And so it goes!

§ § §

¶ There is also the true greatness that stands as a rock and is known as integrity.

¶ When they offered to make Washington king, he refused, for his battle was for the Republic; and of the thousands of men who walk this earth to-day, sounding in public places hollow words for the Republic, and posing as the friend of the people, the bribe of king would be too much to be set aside.

¶ They would surely fall before the temptation and in that moment of personal power forget the cause of the people.

¶ But the fable is that Washington refused to be made king—and his fame will live.

§ § §

¶ In a world of little men, there is another use of the word "great." It applies to a life spent in struggles against powerful wrongs; and in this hard school are many whose names will never be recorded in Halls of Fame, but for all that their work has not been in vain.

¶ There are also the wise men who by their firmness for right and justice set about it to bring what are called reforms in society. We refer to martyrs like John Brown, the fanatic for the slave; Socrates, drinking the hemlock; Marius, at the ruins of Carthage.

¶ Their paths are stony and it is well with them if they escape the lash or the gallows, for the blind world has long before this stoned its great men to death for their opinions—and many years later, has, as has been so beautifully said, “gathered up the stones and builded them into a magnificent monument.” Yes, with orations, bands of music, soldiers, bells ringing, and joy far and wide through lands.

¶ In this grotesque reversal of opinion, man sees no inconsistency. He is too conceited for that.

§ § §

¶ Matthew suffered martyrdom, by the sword.

¶ Mark, dragged through the streets of Alexandria, expired a victim to the brutality of the mob.

¶ In Greece, Luke was hanged on an olive tree.

¶ John, put in a cauldron of boiling oil, at Rome, escaped and later died a natural death at Ephesia.

¶ James the Great was beheaded.

¶ James the Less was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, and beaten to death with a fuller's club.

¶ Phillip was hanged up against a pillar at Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia.

¶ Bartholomew was flayed alive.

¶ Andrew, bound to a cross, preached to the people till he expired.

¶ Thomas was run through the body with a lance.

¶ Jude was shot to death with arrows.

¶ Simeon Zealotes was crucified, and the place was Persia.

¶ Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded.

¶ Peter was crucified, with his head downwards.

¶ Paul, the last and chief of the apostles, died of violence.

¶ So much for man's judgment of his fellow-mortal, and his conception of the word "great." Life's amazing irony!

VIII

THE WREATH OF CYPRESS

¶ When you are dead, it will make little difference to you what is said of you, and mankind sees no inconsistency in the bleat of words.

¶ How little man is able to estimate justly the work of his fellow-man is seen in many ways; but in none more astonishing than in the attitude of the living toward the living.

¶ Whenever the suggestion is made that a comprehensive biography be penned of some leader of the hour, the usual answer is, "A just and life-like portrait, aiming to depict without prejudice a contemporary, is impossible. The thing to do is to wait till he is dead!"

¶ That mankind elects to wait till the man is dead before writing his history is at once an indictment of the living and a satire on the tomb.

¶ Yes, when his lips are dumb, his eyes closed, his ears hear no more, his whole being fallen under the midnight of impersonality, in the ground, then it is that we come forth with our estimates, our memoirs and our appreciations.

¶ But you ask, why all this delay?

¶ The fierce struggles of ambition, intrigue and bloodshed disclose that the foregoing condition is inevitable.

¶ Men have curious words of felicitation for the dead, for the dead being effaced from the competitions of life, death silences malicious tongues.

¶ The man that now measures his length in the insensate sod, this man is now beyond all human praises, or their need.

¶ Not even the vilest human beast envies the slim green estate, six feet long and elbow-wide.

¶ Kind thoughts are kindled on the altar of memory mounting as a sacred flame of praise.

¶ As time passes, the man's real traits, weaknesses and follies merge more and more into the encircling gloom.

¶ At last History, after the Rembrandt style of art, pierces the dark with a core of light, leveled on one spot only, bringing it into vivid relief.

¶ Or, time passing more and more, the years giving to decades, the decades to centuries, an image is erected of colossal size, a myth-man, whose like never walked this earth.

¶ Hearing the strange story second-hand, another generation, comes close, falls down and worships before this superman; and being on their knees and in a strained position, naturally the statue is immensely foreshortened—till it looms upward to the skies!

IX

HISTORY TEACHES MAN NOTHING

¶ *Our history-things, with pretense to smug officialism, not to say righteousness in our National utterances, constantly remind us that the sun is high in the Heavens and that we are on the forward march: but may we not still be asleep in our beds, our minds a bat's cave of dreams . . . ?*

¶ We prate of the lessons of history, at the same moment doing all in our power to conceal thru our historical-things the realities of life. They, pray, what is the function of the old-line history-scribble?

¶ We prate of the lessons of history, but are there lessons beyond this: that man is as he is?

We have read history in tale, poem, moving-picture, newspaper-column, and on stones in the cemetery: and it is all alike.

Man likes to set forth in his official utterances that, thru devotion to the social order, human beings are gradually ceasing to be human beings, substituting for flesh and blood certain physical and mental euphemisms wherein no brash word betrays the under-surface of life as actually lived, as against the literary methods used to present life in books and documents.

This indictment includes also the singular record of our

official righteousness, as set forth in the President's Message, apropos of our "humanity" in the sale of munitions. ¶ And all this weird historical-thing persists in the face of the fact that man continues to repeat, generation after generation, the essential qualities of human nature, each individual striving for the freest realization of his conception of the word "important"; yet strangely enough, man's official documents would have us believe that man is ceasing to be a human being.

Unwilling to appear as he is, he insists on representing himself as he is not, more especially as he is not in his solemn and owlish writings known as biography and history.

§ § §

¶ The quality called hope and the word smug have long assured us that morally we have gone far, indeed. The general history-thing tendency is to proclaim as already reached certain distant and highly imaginary goals of Brotherhood, much thundered about in the index but later glossed over mightily in the actual text.

¶ To those mere mortals that fail to reach the heights, the charge "nominal" is flung back, this is, nominal instead of real this-or-that; nominal Christians instead of real Christians, for example.

This line of defensive trenches has been hastily dug since the great War of 1914; and the conventional upholders of the lies of society see no inconsistency in charging that Christianity, except the "nominal" kind, does not exist in England, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Russia, or elsewhere in the great European war-zone. The difficulty is not with man or nation, but with failure to stand by something dogmatic, exclusive or ecclesiastical, so we are solemnly assured.

¶ Science tells us : no cause without effect, no effect without cause : hence we see in this history-thing appertaining to the great War of 1914, that man is already talking of a "new" religion to come out of the War. The inevitable reaction from blood-lust to psalm-singing is very simple. It expresses no new aspiration of humanity, however egotistically that end may be proclaimed as centering around some "new" form of social idealism.

¶ The appeal at best, is merely from Philip drunk to Philip sober.

¶ Man, having indulged his world-wide saturnalia of hatred and suspicion, murdering by machinery five millions of human beings, it is but natural that the brothers, in an enthusiasm of admiration, should thereafter fall into each other's arms.

Any "new" religion coming therefrom will not necessarily be an exemplification of brotherhood—any more than were hundreds of prior politico-religious appeals, down thru the dusty corridors of the Past.

¶ Man will continue to be a man, act like a man, live like a man, just as he always has.

Nor must we fail to point out the knothole in the wall, to wit, that man, in addition, will study to present himself as he is not : and here the fight for the newer intellectual freedom must begin !

¶ Why does man prefer to present himself, as he is not ?

¶ Ask no riddles : look around, and make up your mind. Then frame your own answer.

§ § §

¶ Do Americans grow each day more stupid, more selfish ?

In this Republic, especially, we are daily fed on the fallacy that the one "great" modern achievement is embodied in our smiling attitude toward the struggle for existence. Optimism, that special gift of the gods, will cure all ills.

The accepted pastors, poets, philosophers of the day admonish us in a hundred coaxing phrases "never" to lose our poise; we are to "think happiness," we are to keep away from trouble, more particularly sad scenes; we are to sing and dance; and especially should we repeat this formula mornings on awaking and at night when we sink to sleep: "All's well with the world!"

Finally, some millions of men and women in this Republic have carried this moral optimism-run-mad to the point where they accept the preachment that even death itself does not exist for the true optimist; death is classed as "National prosperity," more especially death by American-made cannon: till the rivers of Europe run red with blood.

¶ That sound thinking should precede belief is no longer held of avail. With soft flatteries, man strives to lull himself by turning away his eyes from the cruelties and injustice in Society, endeavors to read the problems of existence out of being by the simple expedient of keeping them out of mind.

Deceive yourself no longer. All this style of optimism-gone-mad is only another vicious form of the history-monger's art, wherein spurious virtues are set up to masquerade as realities.

¶ Instead, let us denounce Civilization for its brutality; let us tell for once, for the good of our immortal souls, not how great we are but how low we sunk; let us dwell on the spirit of injustice, with which this earth abounds; and no longer hide our shame in the perversion of the art of writing till, like the eunuch in the harem, the only safe writer like the only safe man is the one deprived of virility, weakened by expurgation . . . the castrated writer.

§ § §

¶ Look round and reflect that at no time in the recorded

history of mankind has there not been incessant rivalry and feud; also that side by side with dissention has come the idea of progress. We certainly do "progress," but in what direction?

¶ Some writers persistently use the words "manifest destiny" in talking about the "direction" America is going; meaning that we are under the protecting hand of Providence.

May not this be changed to an excess of faith, such as David had in Bible times, or Cromwell in English political life? The great Commoner was able to justify brutalities by declaring that the Lord was on his side. "Trust in the Lord," was his prayer, "but keep your powder dry."

Cromwell did not see in his satire on faith any impeachment of Providence, any confession of weakness or lack of logic; he solemnly held to the theory of manifest destiny.

¶ Use your common sense. There is sharp distinction between destiny and destination. It is conceivable that we might, from certain general political tendencies for example, foreshadow or predict the direction in which these United States are moving; but whether we are now prepared to leap the gulf and proclaim that this direction is an exhibit of manifest destiny in the politico-religious sense, is wholly another matter. Yet this is the mental attitude set forth by many of our National history-mongers till our moral conceit is pitiful, contrasted with our real lives.

¶ Let us take one or two concrete cases: An American election is the expression of the will of the majority (maybe) but is it necessarily a sign of a destiny, or is it instead only a sign of a destination?

¶ The invention of the steam engine, spinning and weav-

ing machines, telephone, phonograph, and the others, have made for certain additional closeness of human relations on the social, business and practical side; but are we to deduce from this that the regeneration of mankind, the New Hope, the New Jerusalem, is to be ushered in by an era of machinery?

¶ The discovery of the circulation of the blood, vaccination, the use of various antiseptics, lymphs and anti-toxines, tend likewise to create a larger and a closer community of interest together with a better human understanding; hence men are constantly expressing the hope that science will, nay already has prolonged the average period of human life; has to a certain extent banished pain from the sickroom and has made life more endurable, as we pass along—but are these hopes of longevity and greater average freedom from aches and fevers to be read indeed as tokens of manifest destiny behind the pronouncements of science, or on the other side is it any more than the indication of a general direction, often changed, often swerved from, often set aside, often contradicted by later discoveries, and often subsequently proven totally false and hopeless?

For it must not be forgotten that science has its blunderings, no less than politics or invention.

Or as Sheridan Ford says: "In these days of hurried and unthinking effort, remedies insist upon their diseases that Science may triumph and no time be lost."

§ § §

¶ Men glorify law and order, in public: yet in private seek to set aside the restraints of law and order.

¶ Even should the prisoner in a moment of acute honesty plead "guilty," and be held to appear for sentence, it is not unlikely that, in the interim, peculiar changes take place in his mind.

¶ On the morrow, the lawyer steps forward and requests that the plea be changed to "not guilty;" that the prisoner was "not himself" when he made the former admission; that the prisoner was in an "abnormal state of mind and did not know what he was doing."

¶ This strange situation is repeated daily in courts throughout America. Every man arraigned is "not guilty."

¶ I have seen a man stab a victim with a knife, then plead "Not guilty" a few moments later.

¶ I have seen a woman throw acid on another woman's dress, and when arraigned plead "Not guilty."

¶ I have seen a thief snatch a purse in a crowded street, only to tell the judge "Not guilty, your honor."

¶ I have known a man to forge signatures to a mortgage, flee the country, live in luxury in foreign lands, under a fictitious name, and when brought back enter his plea, "Not guilty."

¶ And altho few men are deceived, the fiction is set up that when the man flourished the knife he was not himself; when he stole the purse, he was not himself; when he forged the mortgage, or seduced the girl, he was not himself. Never is man "himself" in his uncritical moments, but always the victim to bad men or bad laws.

¶ What curse has fallen on this our race that men instinctively dread and fear each other in their books and writings; and to our inevitable isolation, as individual human beings, we do now deliberately add the frightful weight of historical hypocrisy to misdirect the inquiring eye: we call East the West, the moon the sun; we picture pinchbeck as gold, pebbles as diamonds; our national gluttonies masquerade as abstinence, our national shams as realities, our national hates as love, our national greed as generosity, our national curses as prayers;—till thus we would link our little lives with the eternal God . . .

¶ Not how great we are, but how low we sunk is the thing . . . Come, why not? Surely you do not expect a man to make confession against himself?

¶ Do these words convict us of holding that life is essentially "something evil?"

Not at all!

Fighting, loving, praying—such is life summed up. A blow, in the fighting; a kiss, in the loving; a prayer, in the praying. Kisses and curses are equally sweet, in their proper places as all men well know;—and a prayer ends life's strange scene.

And if you ask me "why" man is that way, I can only reply: Because he "is" that way; nor is there any good reason why he should "not" continue to be that way, regardless of the cunning of his apt-historians.

¶ One thing, at least, is settled: he will never tell the truth about himself in his books or official documents.

Any writing intended for more than one pair of eyes may be depended upon to depart from reality to this extent, always: to do whatever is necessary in order not to dispel the illusion of brotherhood.

¶ How is this farce kept up, in history?

Man, refusing to apply cause and effect, substitutes some little, immediate "cause" and passes the big causes.

He seems to be afraid of his own part, as a human being. For example, during the great War of 1914, many able writers lashed themselves into fury trying to show that "all" came about thru a broken treaty—more or less, here or there.

The part played by man, the fighter, was insolently rejected; and we behold historians thundering about the faulty politico-religious construction of society, regardless of ten thousand instances wherein it is clearly shown that no enterprise of politics whatsoever but comes to

grief at last, not because it is faulty or less faulty, but because of human nature.

Civilization after Civilization has crumbled to ruin not because the plan was not good enough as a plan, but because in the end men will have their way.

§ § §

¶ There is no question that man's recorded ignorance regarding himself and his little ways, as slurred over in historical writings, is in itself still another vile pose to support certain forms of national, civic or individual conceit, rather than face fundamental facts.

Even a crude examination of origins and causations in social maladies under which we groan, would suggest that if we ever hope to advance we no longer deceive ourselves by glorifying bits of fact, detached and floating twixt earth and sky, idealizing men's ways.

We should begin by facing man, himself, and noting closely his little ways; this should be the great fact in the thing called history, but thus far it has been least honored.

¶ The fundamental truth we have pointed out about man's historical pretensions is so simple that its value may well be overlooked.

It need not take long then to see that the great "why" between promise and performance, religious, social or political, resolves itself into the eternal conflict to warp man over from what he secretly is to something that he pretends to accept in public, but in private protests against.

Machine-driven politics, machine-driven religions find you as you are and leave you as you were: regardless of the proud brag of a social order built on something more than hypocrisy and deceit.

With a steeple every half mile, a school house on every

second corner, and a political harangue at every cross-roads, we change and change again our man-made laws and once more herald the better day: but these laws leave man's heart untouched; for the simple reason that man was man long before he was a lawyer—and will remain a man long after the race of lawyers has passed into oblivion.

§ § §

¶ Although there is a wide gulf between repealing one man-made law and passing another, and thus entering the New Utopia, man likes to make himself believe that the "new" politics or the "new" religion will enact the missing miracle.

This explains how prone we are, one and all, to support for public consumption absurd reports of spurious individual, civic or national politico-religious codes, as against known private performances.

Everywhere of late years thru this land we have seen to the point of mental nausea the reforming-fellow with his new moralities, his new religion, his new progressive politics; protesting in pious piffle the essential unity of nations.

¶ Yes, let our loud-mouthed reforming editor, a freak in very appearance, this very day put on, to create the proper mental hocus-pocus, his tin crown and his yellow robe of cotton cloth, and mounting his soap-box at the curb proceed now with his Heaven-defying harangue.

At the psychological moment he brings out his many-paged Scroll of the Referendum and you and I start forward, to sign; sign we scarcely know what, but in the general excitement sign we do; not without a certain inner righteousness bordering on moral indignation that we did not sign the thing, long ago, to wit:

¶ That the sex-instinct be limited to breeding, only, within

the law, and having once bred, it is ordained that man shall die.

¶ That woman shall no longer use her fatal spell of beauty, to ensnare men.

¶ That a child born out of wedlock shall be branded with a tiny fleur-de-lis, making clear his inferiority to the child born in wedlock; regardless of the fact that all the midwives in Chicago surveying two new-born babes, one the child of love, the other the offspring of state-officialism (as certified by a 75-cent wedding license), are unable to tell one from the other, knowing no names or pedigrees.

¶ Or, our reforming-fellow urges that all the vines in America be uprooted, and sign that we certainly do with a sort of mock-heroic final flourish of our busy, social goosequill.

¶ Thus do we play the braggart with our brother's business and find glory in announcing that if "500 believe," it must be a sign of more truth, than if "only one believed." And when 5000 "believe," not only is the new idea important, but is a veritable sign of manifest destiny. We are now committed to these particular politico-religious attitudes, as against all other politico-religious attitudes whatsoever, offered by rival reforming-fellows: at least for the time being our lot is cast with our particular reformer and his particular attitudes. Henceforth, we glory in the moral uplift that comes of counting ourselves of some new church, party, or cult.

§ § §

¶ To maintain undisturbed the iridescent dream of man's moral obligation about his brother, is the one solemn duty of kept-historians.

Therefore, in all writings intended for the public eye, man supports a strict and hideous censorship in National history, morals and manners; a jealously guarded control

over all scribblings makes impossible any picture of the under surface, as against outward appearances.

¶ "Cut out 100 feet of film," says the moving-picture censor, headed by the dignified Madam Grundy, "this will never do; it is too scandalous."

¶ "Blue-pencil that love episode," orders the publisher, "or we will be arrested for improper use of the mails."

¶ "Tone down that scene where the man refuses to salute the flag; it is unpatriotic," urges the stage director.

¶ To keep the surface of Society unruffled even by so much as a disturbing ripple, regardless of the sink-hole beneath, is the nominal ideal behind all writings intended for general delectation.

¶ What abnormal something is gratified by censor-hypocrisies in poems, pictures and histories?

¶ To read man's international remarks, more especially his congratulatory resolutions, treaties and agreements, is in truth little more than to listen to a braggart's tale, full of sound but wanting in sincerity: a tale ballooned to the bursting: a tale termed historical but in reality a conventional pose of Society, used to bolster up the "should be" in the "already is."

§ § §

¶ If all those vast human swarms, black, brown, red, yellow and white, that at present crawl like ants over this Earth should of a sudden perish utterly in stupendous world-racking catastrophe bringing chaos to reign again, this fair globe now a black and voiceless ruin swinging thru space in utter darkness, dead, without seed or fires whatsoever: nor mortal stick nor stone remained of it all, with the sole exception of a shelf of books writ in times of old and called "histories": and in the fulness of a New Time, let us say 100,000 years hence, a strange people should descend from the planet Mars; and the greatest

scholar amongst them after vast researches should find, in some devilish way, the actual key to our lost alphabet, as seen in the miraculously preserved book-scribbles: then this supreme question, Whether after translating the books, line for line, the explorers would obtain a true picture of the race that perished?

¶ Would intimate companionship with a shelf of histories, even tho it were half a mile long, acquaint the newcomers with the heart of the vanished people?

¶ We reply at once that, herein, a certain bitter satire between life as lived, and life as reported for historical consumption, invariably nullifies the sincerity of the printed word. The width of this chasm is known to those who have had experience in the ways of the world.

¶ Not only would the savant from Mars be unable to learn, from our own reports, what manner of men we were, but also would it utterly escape him that every class on this Earth always strove to have offences which injured that class subjected to extreme penalty, yet prated of Brotherhood: for misuses of power by religious sects, political parties, as well as by individuals in their private lives, are so obscured by glorification of kept-historians that Vice is always masquerading in the robes of Virtue; and no crime so great that expediency of some sort is not ultimately set up to condone: as for example the underlying causes of the great War of 1914.

X

THE HUMAN KALEIDOSCOPE

¶ *From age to age, it has been the practice of history-mongers to flatter our pride by telling us how great we were, not how low we sunk: till we have come to believe that History is not a record of men's little ways, but of the doings of demi-gods . . .*

¶ A strong leader, by tireless repetition of some idea, finally brings about faith in that idea. It does not follow that this leader must necessarily be wiser than the masses. Often he may be proven a charlatan, but this does not justify cynical damnation. The mountebank is swayed, even as you are, by pride, passion and prejudice. It is always his will to power, or your will to power, rather than the inherent validity of his ideas or your ideas!

¶ First, he stands alone with his idea, whatever it may be. He keeps repeating it, but no one listens. Finally, one person is convinced! This is the beginning. Well, if one, why not two, then ten, then a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand?

¶ And so the wonder grows.

¶ At last, our stubborn man with the idea is believed! He now has his long-awaited day to prove the force of his contribution to human welfare.

¶ Here enters a strange fallacy.

¶ The people expect some new form, or change of government, to make them happy and free. The machinery of legislation is the thing. It is proclaimed the great leveler.

¶ Thus men eagerly try all manner of political enterprises, believing that ultimately in some plan of government, social equality will result. In the light of the anomaly that in spite of our efforts, we persist in reverence for "the good old" days, as against the iniquities of the moment, it is clear that either we deceive ourselves, or are forever wandering about in a fool's paradise.

¶ In this regard, is our Republic any happier to-day under forty-eight States than under the original thirteen? Or, if the test be not happiness but religion, can it be shown that we now observe the Golden Rule more than did our fathers? Or, if the test be neither gaiety nor Golden Rule, then is it our golden mountain, heaped in trafficking in battles? These are great questions!

¶ Have done with your high-sounding gibberish, your mock-heroics and your shams, flattering man to death: history should be neither more nor less than the stark story of the human heart, or human nature in action.

¶ We have had too little of it in the past: man has thus far been afraid of his own record, has refrained from picturing himself as he is, and has substituted a spurious history-thing compounded of self-conceits and lies.

This peculiar, lying type of writing has mightily pleased man, in times gone by; but the lid was off when the Great War burst into fury: no longer could man conceal from himself the essentials of his nature. Kept-historians have been mightily put to it ever since to censor the facts.

¶ There will always be a new crop of Immortals, no doubt, but henceforth it is going to be more difficult to conceal the strings that make the puppets dance.

¶ We need a king! A king should be such-and-such. He must act thus-and-so. Lay out the purple robe, the ermine, the crown, the sceptre, the globe of this Earth. ¶ Even in this Republic, has not the cry gone forth, afar: We need an heroic figure, carrying the burdens of humanity and fighting the battles of humanity. We do not want a mere man; we prefer a demi-god. Thus, our Nation's glory will be embellished.

¶ By cutting and shuffling, by keeping the man out of it, by repression and by blue-penciling, at last with much pains we laboriously create our royal fellow, tricked in precious ermine-trimmed robes;—and when he speaks the world must stand agape.

¶ Is it not high time we were done with this historical anti-gravity, forced to view our king (who after all is a mere mortal), dangling 'tween Heaven and Earth; with no familiar frailties of flesh and blood to prove him brother to the common man? This overdone history-thing is getting on our nerves. It is not honest. It is crooked. It feeds us on wind and gas.

§ § §

¶ We are thinking at this moment of many names, made "great" by incessant pounding of brass. Instead, the crude man were good enough!

It is a pity that human weaknesses should be so overlaid with fluff and embroidery that the erring fellow masquerades as a moral giant. The old-line idea of brag in history-things has long obscured our dearly beloved sins and takes delight instead in looking on man—decidedly as he is not. Is man ashamed of himself, otherwise why does he prefer to present himself as he is not . . . ?

¶ Open the history-thing book anywhere, at haphazard. Presto, we chance upon the mock-heroic. The case will suffice for hundreds, up and down the scale. The prin-

ciple we seek is the psychology behind the history-thing. The idea is to flatter the human animal.

¶ Immortal John, made "immortal" largely by literary tricks repeated till accepted as Holy Writ. This miserable hypochondriac, now dubbed "immortal," as we read here, was, in his own time, classed as a jail-bird. During the miserable years of his prison "den," when the heavenly light was supposed to be streaming thru his mind, John Bunyan sat in his cell writing down his musings of the hypochondriac.

Sometimes, John stood by the gate, chained to the ankle, hawking miserable cotton laces in the hope of a coin to help feed his famished guts. When not writing, John wove lace; and Bedford town often saw this miserable wretch ("Immortal John" they call him now), going half blind twisting his cotton meshes.

John's fellow-prisoners, in the upper tiers, begged by using a stocking hitched to a string and dropped to the street level; the prisoners downstairs tied a spoon to a stick and thrust it under the noses of passers-by.

Vermin swarmed, the cells were dank, prison-fever took off many of the lads, but John Bunyan survived to be dubbed "immortal" by a generation that knew him not.

¶ Immortal? And in leg-irons? So much for man's judgment, as expressed in history, when talking of his fellow-man! The very breath of John's foul hole fairly knocked you down; square narrow walls, torture-chambers; drainless vaults reeked their miasma; frightful cruelties were practised, and there is a story that has crept down the years telling of the machine used to tear hair from the scalp.

§ § §

¶ Bunyan had a chance to get away, but preferred present wretchedness to miseries he knew not of. British

judges were wont to menace men like Bunyan with dreadful penalties, till the prisoner in self-defense, as it were, would petition to be sent beyond seas, and thereupon court attaches would seize, gag, chain hand and foot, such petitioner, bundling him on board for China or Jamaica, there to be sold into slavery.

¶ Thus even so simple an act as knotting threads is spattered with blood and tears, altho the later generation finds the victim a poet and proclaims him Immortal John Bunyan. We get around our stupidity of judgment in various ways, but chiefly by closing our eyes and calling on history to tell us of patent rights for new spinning or weaving machines, names of inventors, dates, documents; and we present our history of weaving in impersonal terms, largely, such as imports and exports, pay roll, and what you please; always by a species of historical anti-gravity keeping John Bunyan and his ilk out of it, endeavoring to detach all human elements; and charging to the glory of national commerce the edging of coarse cotton on the peasant's petticoat over which John and his crucified kind slaved in dungeons.

¶ For those ardent supporters of conventional lies of history who would use the so-called "evolution of machinery" to support a comforting theory of upward Civilization, we might as well, with equal logic turn the thing upside.

Instead of showing man's ingenious assaults on Nature, by substituting machine power for human fingers, the facts of mechanical progress (in this instance weaving), certainly show man's beastly assaults on his own kind.

¶ The high and mighty school of historians have too long replied with their manifest destinies, shining bright and clear thru men's ways; loudly asserting that this Age of Machinery with its innumerable cogs and wheels upholds

the convenient dogma that, side by side with our amazing mechanical ingenuities, we now support corresponding moral improvement in man, himself; but compare these observations, imaginings and protestations with the known and secret facts of life as lived, and as you know it is lived, and your pompously-termed progress is to be taken, instead, merely as another heart-breaking token of man's enormous egotism.

§ § §

¶ Man in his march does unusual things, and quite naturally confuses his progress in mechanics with his spiritual ideals: holding that the redemption of this earth is to come thru certain ameliorations and conveniences associated with combinations of brass, tin, iron, copper, and other metals. These inventions will help carry him to Heaven on flowery beds of ease:

¶ Foods that to a certain extent make him less dependent on Nature—

¶ Eyeglasses to overcome failing sight—

¶ Encasing his feet in the hide of the bull instead of going barefooted—

¶ Utilizing electric waves to send messages—

¶ Clothing his body against the winter's storms, thru the art of weaving—

¶ Traveling swiftly in his automobile, in places where his grandfather laboriously used oxen—

¶ And finally, also to go forward by patrolling the streets with men called police, carrying revolvers and clubs; and by setting up stone buildings with barred windows for the forcible detention of those who, as they say, commit crimes against society.

¶ Now here is the curious conflict between man, as a natural man, and man as a member of society: That as time passes man tries to make himself believe that he is

on this earth to carry out a social, religious and artistic programme; and that, in proportion as he adheres to what are known as the best inventions of his little hour he is a good man, otherwise he is a bad man.

¶ All this is denominated "progress."

§ § §

¶ If the coming of electricity, motor-cars, telephones, and the other triumphs of this much-acclaimed Age of Machinery, is supposed to imply a corresponding moral increase in man's stature, side by side with the mechanical giants he has created, then why does man prostitute his noblest inventions to help him kill wholesale, by machinery?

¶ The Napoleonic wars were fought with flint-lock muzzle-loaders, with smooth-barrels, letting the bullets fly where they might: came next the breach-loader with its mechanism for more deadly slaughter, yet only one ball of lead out of 600 did find the heart in Wellington's campaigns; at Spiechern the Germans, reasoning more closely in mechanics, killed off one Frenchman with each 279th volley, and at Woerth the death toll, bullet for heart, was one corpse for 147 balls of lead; but so much did Society progress in our much-lauded Age of Machinery that in the Russo-Turko war one victim died for each 66 bullets fired;—and what the frightful harvest of death may be figured, bullet for bullet, in the momentous War begun in 1914, will prove the American advance in killing by machinery, made since the crude days of 1800!

¶ Devising more cunning ways of doing cruelties, at the same time we turn our eyes to the skies and thank our God that we do indeed exemplify in history the manifest destiny that so long our historians have assured us is ours.

¶ Until it can be shown that the heart, to-day, differs from the heart of old, the statistics on which we rely to

support our pride fall by the wayside. The story of our battles, kingly lines, political parties, crop reports, oil exports, balance of trade, assumes the latter-day development of the individual man beyond his father. And this is true in some respects—but not in the way we would have it appear.

The mockery of this type of history is found in this: that you could know it from end to end and not know man, as he is.

The ancient and honorable ideal that the American statesman fortifies himself by the study of history is merely to ask for bread and being forced to lick a plate of brass.

§ § §

¶ This is what we are told: that perfected individuals compose the grand order of our National light bearers; that Civilization goes forward by a crooked road, now a short advance, again a rear-curve; a crop of wheat and a crop of tares; harvest and blight, blight and harvest; fat years succeeded by lean;—but all the while man rises to higher things, century after century.

¶ This is what we know: in blood and tears we do struggle up and down this Earth seeking our satisfactions, nations as well as individuals, and refusing to yield our advantages, even as you and I do that identical thing in our petty affairs.

Thus we are forced to piece together our pitiful historical mumblings about our glorious intentions, and solemnly proclaim our National moralities.

Lincoln abolished slavery, but a thousand types of slavery exist at this very hour, as they always have; Howard reformed the prisons of England, but a thousand hidden prisons still exist, as they always have.

No more suffering for the weavers, we solemnly protest,

after certain legal reforms following the weavers' riots of 1815, no more weavers dying for lack of bread.

Yet in 1915, we take some hundreds of thousands of weavers from their spindles, put rifles in their hands and send them out to enact the role of butchers.

Then we lie to ourselves in our books and we censor the news, fearing the light of day on our conduct; and as fast as we are unmasked we plead justification.

It is as tho our historians, closing their eyes to the fact that at no time on this Earth has there been peace, occupy themselves even while the storms are raging in plugging up holes in the social dyke as fast as the angry waters rise, while ignoring, nay denying the ever-present hurricane.

¶ But, on the other hand, we pass our days reporting lies, largely, and crying out that all's well, as tho we were afraid to take a good look at ourselves in the glass of Time. Certain it is that we may not overcome the morbid growths of Society unless we are willing to make frank confession at home: that we may thus gather truths upon which to support a real theory of origins and causation will never come to pass as long as man persists in flattering his self-conceit, thru the scribblings of kept-historians.

¶ If now all this artificial building up and tearing down of one theory after the other, in religion, society or politics, is of the stupendous importance writers would have us believe, why not for once construct a society wherein man may act in accordance with his inherent nature, and at the same time not offend?

Why may not the irreconcilable breach between man's ways and man's conception of a superior social order be bridged?

¶ Man himself stands in the way. His very rebellion against society as found is a confession of the artificiality

of the struggle. To warp man over to something that he accepts in public, but denies in private has always been foredoomed to failure; and the innate hypocrisy and deceit of society persists largely because man will continue to try every political theory within reach, excepting always one: To cure man of his morbid tastes (if such is your proud hope), start in and tell the truth about yourself. Begin with your own drunkenness, your seductions, your numerous types of selfishness, your vulgar ambitions, your petty thieving, and the various social masks you assume, to cover your face, and still hold your position in society. Be exceedingly candid; come forward with all necessary and intimate details; and in due time, piecing all together, rest assured some social genius will find the remedy for the morbid growths, even as scientists by studying the likes and dislikes of cellforms in the human body, finally hit on specific antitoxins for old and baffling diseases.

¶ If in medicine, why not also in society?

¶ Here is what we should do: History, for years to come, till mankind is awakened from stupid dreams of imaginary perfection amidst a world of bitterness and strife, should cease being a fairy-tale to flatter us into delight over our individual, civic or national virtues. Instead, let the strong man come forth with his methods of the dissecting room, this new Doctor of Social History; and let him proceed now without further delay fearlessly to inform his students of social blood taints and social morbid growths.

Too long have we looked only at the rouged lips, the false hair, the velvet gowns, the ermine robes, the diamond tieras, while in God's name starvation, misery, hypocrisy and fraud have been supported in high places.

¶ We see no real social enlightenment possible, for this

Earth, unless our breed of animals with the pen drop their rose-water ink-pots, and seize the surgeon's knife: for too much flattery has been the spoil of us these many years gone by.

At least then we will know what to expect of human beings. We do not hope to transform man into something more than man: that were foolish and vain. But man could at least look at his own picture and make up his mind if he is satisfied.

§ § §

¶ Yes indeed, thank God! the bayonet may still be trusted in British hands, or in German or in American, French, or Russian, and its use described by our kept-historians as "chiefly moral."

Surely we are not exasperating enough to expect humans to cease to be humans, in order to demonstrate that this or that political party should rule the hour?

¶ The children of Montrose were unable to read because of long hours in the cotton mills, but to-day tho our generation boasts that it can read in seven languages, our culture has not robbed us of our National Museum (Smithsonian), where in one of the largest sections are displayed hundreds of types of guns, pistols, swords, daggers, and other weapons of slaughter, showing the vast amount of thought the human animal has devoted to murder, at wholesale, and that too in times peculiarly exploited as the forward march of progress, as against the cruder methods man used in the days of the flint-lock.

§ § §

¶ Let us be reasonable.

Could the ancient and honorable tribe of weavers and spinners return to this Earth, on a brief tour of observation, this would be their report:

¶ In the days of the Pharaohs, the shroud we so labor-

iously wove from flax with spindle and distaff, winds the shepherd and king, alike.

¶ In the far times of Homer, long, long before the Age of Machinery was dreamed of, still our women use the crude methods of spindle and distaff, and still the shroud covers the faults and frailties of human clay.

¶ In Solomon's day, as Holy Writ proclaims, her busy hands hold the distaff and the cloth wraps mortal dust, whether for court ball or for the tomb.

¶ Likewise, in our own glorious time, even to a period as recent as the Battle of Waterloo, the old-fashioned spindle and distaff remains man's main support to protect his body from the winter's storms, or to fashion the purple of kings for avarice and pride.

Then comes the Age of Machinery and the distaff is laid away for the spinning-frame; first run by water-power, then by steam, to-day by electricity; and with power increased ten-millionfold ball-room gowns of choicest fabrics, in wondrous art-patterns, are now fabricated with lightning-like rapidity for this proud generation; supporting our ancient pride of position by woven gee-gaw; but still likewise do we need the plain white shroud worn by the Mummy, four thousand years ago.

¶ Now tell me, pray, in what respect, whether in the far off Age of the Distaff or in the present Age of Machinery, man has ceased to be man?

Whether Richard the Lion still chases the pagans on the sacred soil of Palestine, or whether a modern statesman with feet of clay, (speaking for the United States, for England, France, or Germany), calls on High Heaven to testify to the justice of "our" cause, as against all other causes whatsoever, wherein does the story differ, wherein is the tale new?

¶ Is there other, and if there is what does it record?

¶ There always was and always will be places on this Earth wherein the inhabitants set their dogs on any stranger whose curiosity leads him to visit them; and they may even be American dogs at that.

Nay, nay, do not frown; calmly face the fact. Before you put on your make-up to go out on the street, it will do you no harm to take a look at yourself in the glass.

¶ Plagues sweep over European battlefields, half the population perishes; war desolates Belgium or Serbia; fields are tilled or untilled; crops ripen or crops rot;—what does it all mean, or does it mean anything, and what about it?

Do you not see that man has a dual, nay a many-sided nature, and with equal joy now loves, now fights, now prays?

He is not inconsistent in this. He is very human, indeed.

And while to the casual eye it seems as tho for the time being Death confers a monopoly on all human thought, at the same time to offset, this Parliament or that Congress solemnly pass resolutions declaring that there "shall be" no more wars, and the churchmen proceed to raise great funds for the erection of imposing new steeples;—and mankind, weary of war, now unites in psalm-singing and in uplifting monuments to God.

¶ Enee, meenie, minee, mo—what do you make out of it?

§ § §

¶ As long as man is man, these three things will he do: Fight, love and worship. And these, then, are his supreme occupations, "what" he regards as most important, taking him at his own private reckoning.

In this regard, ten thousand years see him still hunt his food, seek the woman always, and look for a sign in the skies.

All reactions, all protests, all new knowledge find him in three particulars unchanged; and if these three do not limit man's progress at least they define clearly his nature. He must fight because to struggle is the universal law of life; he must love because sex attraction is the strongest stimulus known to man, turning him from one labor to another, one revenge to another, one cruelty to another, one sacrifice to another, one mercy to another, sounding the heights and depths of life, from brutal murders to spiritual aspirations, all in the name of love; and finally, man must seek his sign in the skies, because man is essentially a religious animal and if he cannot worship a god will worship gold, or power, or woman's beauty—or will worship himself.

§ § §

¶ What then is this thing called national history, as revealed by the human kaleidoscope? From age to age, its aspects vary as we change our point of observation, but on close examination we find that it is always stuffed with the identical bits of colored glass—that at one moment make the pretty cross, at the next the devil's tripod.

XI

ALL MEN AT HEART TYRANTS

¶ *Tyranny is a natural characteristic of mankind, likewise love, likewise hate: and few men pass thru the years without abusing love or hate: also, it is well to remember that, in spite of the flatteries of history-mongers Nations are but crowds of men, exercising freely, tho under cover, all the faults, frailties and obsessions of the human animal. . . .*

¶ Man is so constituted that he is able to justify his conduct, always, whether it be a coronation or a crucifixion. The singular fact is that men, like nations, at times endure with extreme patience conditions that seem well-nigh intolerable; insults are passed over lightly, while deep wrongs go unavenged; or upon frivolous pretexts or, indeed, for no adequate reason, men or nations plunge headlong into war.

¶ There comes the inevitable day when, taking affairs into his own hands, man's parchments lettered with "whereas" this and "whereas" that, signed, sealed and delivered with solemn forms, become so much chaff to be blown away by the first wind.

His recorded idealisms of brotherhood gives way to an obsession to kill. Later, the demon of war dies in his breast and once more he turns his solemn gaze in the

direction of the Promised Land, in which the peoples of this earth are to be united in the bonds of liberty, equality and fraternity.

¶ In considering now what is commonly called National History, as recorded for the delectation of all, let us not be befogged; but let us hold ever before us the image of men and their little ways.

Thus, we will not go far adrift, nor will be troubled too much in a vain quest for "reasons" why certain events turned this way or that, at a given moment, then swung back again as time passed away.

Real history, if it ever is written, must be bulwarked upon human nature; the ruling passion at a given moment: whether the national stomach craved milk or liquor; how the people felt; what this people regarded as important; what went on in their heads, or what was wrong with the national liver; whether scowling or joyous, sulky or frivolous; what, in short, the people felt like doing, whether to sing and pray, or to drink alcohol till frenzied to kill.

Regardless of their parchments and their constitutions, what did they hold essential, and how did they proceed—these are some of the questions.

¶ A Nation's physical and psychical fibres are precisely like your own physical and psychical fibres; and even as you, no matter what your conduct; proceed to set yourself in the most reasonable light to your own proper justification and to save your pride, likewise with nations whatever is put in operation whether of benevolence or greed is always to be taken for granted.

Treaties are made and unmade—do you wish examples? Laws are solemnly recorded to be upheld or broken, as the spirit moves—do you question this? Study your newspapers for a week,

Prayers are uttered—to bolster up one side or the other side. Do you doubt that God was on the side of the North, because Grant had the better Commissary Department, and not on the side of the South, because Lee's army was starving?

§ § §

¶ To lay the axe at once at the root: tyranny is a natural characteristic of mankind, likewise love, likewise hate, and few men pass through the years without abusing love or hate; also, it is well to remember that nations are but men, multiplied by thousands.

The survey shows the imperfection of life or the possibility of the perfectability of life, as you will, but it shows primarily men's ways.

¶ There is no science about it. Possibly there may be such a thing as a scientific method in endeavoring to gather up the "materials" of history (or for that matter forty-odd scientific methods), but as for the "thing in itself," this thing called History, or historical writing, disguise the fact as you will, it does indeed attempt to deal harmoniously with confusion, riot, carnival, comedy, tragedy—as you like it.

¶ Volumes have been written to prove just "why" we defeated Great Britain in Colonial days, but the real reason is because we desired so to do and hated hard enough and were strong enough and fortunate enough to bring our wish about. We stole, or annexed, or purchased—as you will—California from Mexico because we had the opportunity, nay made the opportunity and were glad of the opportunity; and if one day the United States flag floats from the North to the South Pole it will be because that is our ambitious wish as a nation, and not because we find justification in this or that document in the archives.

¶ You see, man is always able to set forth his "reasons," whether for a coronation or a crucifixion.

He justifies his conduct by making up his mind, this way or that way ; and making up one's mind, with a nation as with an individual, is indeed a simple matter. By ignoring one line of facts and laying emphasis on another line of facts, presto the thing is done.

XII

THE PROFOUND FALLACY

¶ *That Nations exist to do good to mankind is easily proven: all that is required is for you to close your eyes and accept as inspired what is termed the Nation's history. . . .*

¶ Well, the historians of the after-years survey the situation, as nearly as may be, and in due course bring forth this or that parchment, this or that treaty, this or that law; and we are gravely informed that what the Nation did at that particular moment was "right."

Ponderous volumes are then written to prove whatever has been set up; whereas, all this trouble might be saved if we looked upon history as indeed the record of men and their little ways, that is to say human nature, in action.

¶ Was the so-called annexation of Texas right or wrong? Was the war with Mexico, in the '40's, right or wrong? Was the construction of the German Empire right or wrong? Was the up-building of the British Empire, with its long record of protectorates, seizures, spoils of war, and reprisals, right or wrong?

¶ Who knows?

¶ These situations, and hundreds more, freight the shelves with book after book, and our National pride is increased

when we read that we are "justified," and our conduct is "right."

¶ The plain fact is that, whenever possible, men will do what they like—nations likewise.

At one time we overflow with love and affection, at another unbridled hate runs away with us; and as no human being is consistent, neither is any nation consistent. And, on the whole, there is no reason why a nation should be consistent.

A hundred and one considerations of policy, law, order are swept away in an instant, in your own life, and you fight.

Later, you sit down to a game of chess, wondering how you could have been concerned about a trifle. Consider well your own private history and do not spare yourself.

Do not try to walk on stilts; yes, for once come down to earth where you belong.

¶ Why then make a demi-god of a nation, in historical writings, protesting that the National course is based on high ideology?

The queer thing about it is that nobody is deceived, altho all must pretend to be deceived.

§ § §

¶ What peculiar psychological something is gratified when Society tricks herself out in feathers and gee-gaws and stands looking at herself in the historical beauty-doctor's mirror? To be told that the disfiguring mole is gone, that the white hair still retains its gloss and sleekness, that the hollow cheeks have been rounded, the crow's-marks ironed out—reply O stars, on what it all means.

¶ The great saints are carved out of the greatest sinners; and it is not improbable that our finest epics on repentance, brotherly love and international disarmament,

expressed in Hague peace-reports, will spring from the lips of National leaders who in war did wholesale murder, by machinery.

Once our brutal obsessions are gone, we are, as individuals or as nations, the noblest of our kind; and the great War of 1914 will, as a matter of fact, be followed by unprecedented church-building and an era of poetizing on the virtues of brotherhood.

The higher you rise, the harder you fall; likewise the higher the spiritual rebound, after brutal passion is spent. And no man is more repentant or sees more clearly his duty to his fellow-man than he who the day before turned himself into a maniac with wine.

¶ The De Profundus of nations, recording abstract sentiments of brotherly love, will usually be found to be neither more nor less than cause and effect;—vivid allegations of marvelous future good, originating in deep past wrongs. We see nothing improper in this, nor do we set it up here as a defect. Men will be men, so why conceal the fact longer?

¶ Fighting, loving, praying; everything by turn and nothing long; from demi-god to imbecile; from rattle-box to prayer-book and beads; such is that glory and that jest, man.

§ § §

¶ On that day of universal acknowledgment, men will no longer care to befool either themselves or their fellow-kind, by setting up mock-heroics.

A new type of history, far more honest than any that has yet appeared, will then be ushered in, for men as well as for nations.

The new type of record, based on the stark realism of human nature, will save worlds of ink and paper—to say nothing of the eyesight of historians. It will also

help us to go forward if that is what we wish; because then we will no longer deceive ourselves numbering our spurious virtues.

To-day, under the microscopic methods in vogue, history-mongers are forced to turn the pages of innumerable parchments, dust-laden and obsolete.

These fatiguing investigations are premised on the profound fallacy that nations are consistent, and that nations are twice alike.

Were this a fact, the card-index system of writing history were indeed correct.

To know the "facts" is at all times essential, but to make yourself believe that you will find somewhere, embalmed in law and parchment, in treaties, in speeches, in I know not what, ultimate reasons "why" this or that nation did this or that at a precise moment in its history, is to say that you know all about the moons of Jupiter—if indeed Jupiter has moons.

¶ History is human nature, in action.

§ § §

¶ For a thousand years, men have endeavored by self-flatteries to link their lives with the gods. For this, the breed of historians is largely responsible; every Nation has its chaplains to offer prayers before the battle, expressing the mystic belief that God is on "our" side.

¶ And regardless of man's proud brag of passing still another life on a distant star, man reserves for himself in this life the use of the fagots and the lash.

¶ Despite this lapse, man is always able in "history" to leap the gulf between promise and performance, between spiritual anxieties as to the state of his soul and his "practical" every-day interests.

¶ Never forget that what man consistently continues to do, in spite of all the high brag of the historians, is to

go on loving, go on hating, go on eating, go on fighting, and go on praying.

¶ He is not inconsistent in doing these opposed things.

¶ He is merely acting like a human being.

¶ And this will be the theme, as worked out one day in the newer, truer type of history, the only true history helping us forward.

¶ Perhaps you do not like it, but what's the odds?

¶ How very dull this world would be if all men were of identical opinions, and bayed to the moon the same hymns.

¶ As one of the immediate results of the great War of 1914, it has been stuck under our noses that many of our smug human pretenses will have to be revalued, marked down a bit; yes, in many cases even put on the bargain counter. It was no doubt a great moral shock, but in the end it will do us good, like the sudden plunge in cold water, before breakfast.

Many of our historical pretenses are now seen to have been based on pure cant; also, that our historical high brag went too far ahead of our morals.

In the past, we always pictured ourselves as we wished, and obliging historians have, like industrious photographers, retouched the National negative till it was reduced to a lovely putty-like smoothness, with all the human wrinkles eradicated.

Men for years had been saying, "All's well with the world, all problems settled, brotherhood around the corner."

And men made themselves victims to this absurd historical method of retouching.

¶ These "p's" are always in order in "history": Pomposity, Pretense, Passion, Prejudice.

Now add Prunes and Prisms and you have the circle complete.

¶ Also "history" often turns out to depend on whether you are shouting for your side or are booing the enemy.

The British mob goes crazy over the Kaiser, but might just as well turn loony over the French, if say, wind was still blowing the way it blew in 1900, when Parisian journalists fairly burst blood-vessels in literary excitements over the British attitude in the Boer war.

¶ Ene, meenie, minie, mo—well, what about it?

Nothing only this: that the human animal likes to retouch his picture to flatter his National pride: and we in America have done the same, even as has the Teuton, the Frenchman and the Russian.

It's all very human but it's all very **unhistorical**, else we must get a new name for "history."

Do we really mean to go on believing that "history" is an aggregation of boosters, intent on high brag, far ahead of our morals?

Ene, meenie, minie, mo, it may well be. Who knows.

§ § §

¶ We dislike to be forced to add that of late years the "great" National historian is usually president of some arson-gang. He makes a business of burning National ideals that are not "his" Nation's ideals.

For example, under the war spirit of 1915, Kipling noisily harangued anybody who would listen, avowing: That the Germans would rape the women of the Island, if the opportunity came, and that, anyway, the Germans were cowards. Now, pray "what" is history?

For this, he is often given gold medals, and his name is taught to the schoolchildren.

He is regarded as a "great" man.

§ § §

¶ In times of peace the kept-historian, beginning in the cellar of the Congressional library, literally reads his way

to the garret, informing himself on all the "authorities" on his topic; what every living and dead scribbler babbled and cackled on the subject. By some extraordinary feat of brute strength, he pieces these together for the edification of his fellow countrymen.

¶ The work often takes years and is known as "monumental." It is like the Pyramids. Those who come after marvel at the gigantic labors involved but wonder what 'twas all about, or why it came into being.

¶ One fact, however, is always clear; the ways of mere human animals have no place in his "history." There is everything in it, except men and their little ways.

The Patriot is represented as sitting on a far-off rock, sighing for his Country, but he has ceased to be a human being. He is now a demi-god.

It is said, with solemnity, that at the battle of Monmouth, Washington used the word "Damn"! but the historian that recorded this very human lapse was promptly beheaded. This seems to be the only place in thousands of pages where Washington acts like a human being.

§ § §

¶ The great war has forced us to revalue many facts we supposed were settled, and one is our dehumanized methods of writing "history."

¶ The idea that mere man has anything to do with "history" never entered the heads of old-line historians; man with all his vices and his feeble virtues; man the political liar, thief and visionary; man the opportunist; man who poses as more than he is, but who crawls on his belly to the temple in order to be known as a "nominal" Christian?

¶ Why not use these well known situations?

¶ Because these things are too uncomfortable. What we want is the "uplift," even if we have to censor the

news to such an extent that we teach our children lies. ¶ Hence it is a favorite practice to present man as the "unconscious" instrument in the hands of the Almighty, carrying out the Almighty's plans.

¶ No matter "what" man does, he is marching forward. He may be going sidewise or backwards, but he is historically going forward.

¶ And, of course, he is impelled by the highest altruistic ideas in all his wars, historians tell us. And certainly a kept-historian ought to know what he is talking about.

¶ Did it ever occur to you how one-sided all this historical glorification of Man really is? We read worlds about what Man thinks of himself, and what Man thinks of Nature; but would it not be a relief to be able to read—just for once!—a book showing exactly what Nature thinks of Man?

¶ Man's idea of "history" is to write something to flatter his pride, sound his brag or boost his boast. Since the beginning we have been doing that very thing.

¶ If he burns Joan at the stake, in one generation, and in the next has her canonized as a saint, he is not acting as an inconsistent human beast who not long ago crawled on all fours but now walks upright. Not at all, instead, he is exhibiting the "mysterious ways of history," whose final revelation is of a destiny on some distant star.

§ § §

¶ Man dearly loves to present himself as a superior creation, vastly more knowing than the frog or the zebra; and if you ask him he will tell you so, himself.

¶ His historians spend years in spinning their intellectual cobwebs to prove that all's well with this earth, only to find that man is man, and that he loves, hates, fights and prays, as the fancy moves just as he always did, all the historians of this earth notwithstanding.

¶ All that the old-line historians ask us to do is this: Close our eyes to coronations succeeded by crucifixions, and remember that man is a superior being, but do not judge him by his acts.

¶ It is not "historical" to judge a man by what he does; the thing is to judge him by what he says in his books on religion, morals, politics, and in the editorial page of your favorite newspaper.

¶ At least, therein you will find (manufactured) man's higher destiny.

§ § §

¶ There is a vast amount of "history" that leads to downright ignorance and should be rightly excluded from library shelves: is it not time that some new method be used, wherein man can glimpse himself somewhat as he is? The great war has forced us to recognize many shams and pretensions, especially in old-time historical methods.

In the new type of history, based on human nature, man will be depicted as man, with all man's faults and (possibly) a few of his virtues.

¶ You feel the morning breeze of the new time, wherein a man does not need to cease to be a human being in order either to make or to understand "history."

¶ The idea that history should ever be written in terms of vice and virtue, instead of cant and piffle, National brag and quack—how shocking to the conventional lies of society!

"How very weak the very wise,
How very small the very great——"

¶ And still the new type of biographical writing does not necessarily mean a cynic's book, nor yet a disillusion. It

is history in human terms, in the way of man's life as expressed in vice with an occasional glimpse of a fleeting virtue.

¶ And having done with vile flatteries based on enormous egotisms, at last this race will be in a position to go forward: for we will gull ourselves no longer as to "what" we represent.

XIII

ALL LIFE A BATTLE

¶ Under Nature's inexorable decree, this the price we pay for bread, or bone or breath: that fight we must from sleep to sleep, else we do not survive: whether we face the fact manfully and call it War, or instead monger in meanings till murder masquerades as morality. . . .

¶ The air at this moment is filled with war and rumors of war. One hundred years ago it was the same; and one hundred years hence it will be the same.

¶ Why?

¶ War is usually limited to battleships and bayonets, but the everyday struggle of existence means war.

Any man who has hunted in the mountains or fished in the sea will tell you that; any dog knows that his whole life is spent in endeavoring to keep away starvation; and in order to live, other forms of life must perish.

The greatest "pacifist" kills hundreds of animal-forms each year, and as for militarism, there are intimate types of militarism that are associated with the very hopes of your own heart.

¶ Nay, do not start back in indignation.

The struggle of life means war often to death; it is merely incidental whether that scene calls for the loud crack

of a revolver, or the wicked glance of a coquette in a crowded ball room.

¶ The trouble is, man is always fooling himself with soft words, just as he is always going to the historical beauty-doctor, and as he is always looking around for some fortune-teller to uphold him.

He wishes to be told that all is well with his life.

¶ Great masses of the population pass part of their time in giving advice, assuring the doubting ones that all is as it should be.

Men who make a religion of hope and good cheer, often attribute to optimism the consolations of a superior faith.

§ § §

¶ Men go about crying, "Peace! peace!" But there is no peace, nor can there be peace; nor is there any good reason why there should be peace.

There never has been a time on this earth when there was peace, and there is none now.

"How small, of all that human hearts endure,

That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"

¶ Men fight, instinctively; and may the day never come when they will lose their fighting edge.

They fight, and they love and they pray.

Love is a battle, and the hunt for food is a battle, and existence itself is a struggle, from the cradle to the grave.

Men must, then, give thrust for thrust.

¶ The infant struggling toward the light, opens its eyes upon a world of disorder.

Did the infant reason, already in its first feeble moments it would know that to battle is the decree of survival.

A hundred forces are intent on destroying; and any parent well knows the anxieties of the first year, in rearing the child.

¶ The school boy, too, must do battle. On the playgrounds, as well as in the classes, the lad first learns the inequalities of life, finds that his mates cannot always be depended upon to play on the square.

Even to-day, a member of the team is plotting to lose the annual foot-ball game. This fellow, secretly conspiring to be made captain, failing in his ambition, decides on reprisals that will break up the club.

¶ The young man dreams of what he misnames love, that is to say the dawning of the instinct of self-preservation. Impelled by sex-instinct, he starts out on a new kind of war, that is to say he seeks out or hunts out, as you please, his young companion.

He is attracted by her youth, her beauty and her warm red lips.

At night, they go down to the grove and caress under the light of the moon. The struggle is on, and if she yields to his embraces innocently and, as they say, makes a mistake, poor girl, the war against her by Society later forces her to throw her baby into the river; it may even be thru the ice in the dead of winter at that; yes, do that very thing, even in this city of a thousand steeples.

¶ Her life, henceforth, is a prolonged battle with unfriendly social elements around her. You may not call it war, but it is war. Call it what you please! She now has a bitter taste of men and their little ways.

§ § §

¶ But we will take the other side, and we will say that she is what is called honorably married to the man she adores. For this rich young man's favor, did she not have to outdo the other ambitious young women of her set?

¶ Wearing paint, feathers and beads, like a savage, she calls it dressing in style. The day comes when she glories

in the defeat of her rival. Her lips curl in scorn, her heart beats high with satisfaction. She has gained her object, that is to say, she has repulsed the other young woman in the competitions of love. Yet, each is called a moral young woman of the period. In what strange ways men use words, is it not true?

§ § §

¶ Years roll on, and the former frivolous young woman is now a sober-minded matron, with children growing up around her. She engages in a new kind of struggle. Indeed, it comes upon her at unawares, for she never imagined herself the centre of such a conflict. But soon or late, it comes.

¶ She now plans social successes for her children, sends them to the best schools, instructs them against what she calls the wiles of the world.

Her heart often fails her as her son is away late at night with boisterous companions.

What's to become of her son, what of her daughter? If this is not war in the mother's heart, then words have no meaning.

¶ Well, time passes. Her son becomes a victim to drink; war again to save his life; or her daughter, now entering upon the frivolous age, refuses to go to church. Thus the war goes on and on, year after year. This incessant battling wears her life away.

¶ Old age creeps on apace. Now begins a final long struggle with disease. Day by day, she finds her strength failing. Little by little, there is an imperceptible physical and mental loss, and she comes nearer the inevitable end that awaits all mortals.

She recalls the state of her soul. She suddenly realizes that there are a hundred obligations that in time gone by she neglected—neglect of her parents—of her friends

—of her church—neglect of the poor and neglect of the plain duties of passing years.

She makes a last, lone fight to get right with her God. What a struggle this is, to be sure. It racks the inmost fibres of her being.

Her former ambitions in the main now seem absurd, her former attempts to outdo others, her vanity of dress, the wasted hours—war is upon her, a last long terrifying war. She wishes she had lived otherwise!

§ § §

¶ Well, the rain and the wind and the frost beat down and proceed to make war on man's last resting place. The supposedly imperishable granite marker on his grave, if closely examined after twenty years, is now found to be crumbling; year by year, the chinks made by the frost are deepened by the persistent polishing of flying dust.

And each winter the minute crevices fill with snow-water, the frost comes, then the thaw, and the subtle forces of nature crack the stone.

In the end, the very mound sinks more and more until it is again level with the sod.

Thus, in ceaseless but imperceptible warfare of Nature, all trace of the slim little mound under which repose our bones is obliterated. Not even that spot is secure from inevitable change. War even here!

§ § §

¶ Under Nature's inexorable decree, we must fight—whether we call it war or by some milder term. Peace can be gained only through war, whether it is the peace of National honor and security, bulwarked by rifles and dreadnaughts, or whether it is the peace that passeth understanding, in your immortal soul, when you have squared your black life with your fellow-man, before Death strikes you down.

¶ And, after all, is not a soldier who on the field of battle levels a rifle at your heart, more honorable than the cowardly stay-at-home devil, who by his secret scandalous words, blasts a woman's reputation, it may even be forcing her to throw her babe into the river.

¶ Come, what do you think? Why not, then, a new, a more honest and helpful way of writing history instead of longer continuing the old-line mush-gush?

XIV

WHY WAR PERSISTS

¶ Even to-day in your petty life you are forcing your advantages, making your private wars for self or power, seducing your women, lying, stealing, counting your gains, indulging your appetites, building your great castle on the hill, forcing your rivals to capitulate; and, on the whole, are conducting yourself to advance your own ascendancy. History is the record of human nature, in action, otherwise the struggle for existence—war!

¶ Everywhere, we behold the exertions of man, individually, to sustain himself against his rival, be that rival a firm, a corporation, a political party, or a state.

And when he finds conditions not to his liking, he sets about it to change them, that they may be to his liking. His attitude he justifies in various ways; for example, that what he is doing is for the good of others.

¶ Washington, great patriot, found it advisable to align himself against the Government at the time in power; hence, we cannot even set up the fiction that patriotism is the ardent support of your own Government, at all times; for here is a distinguished man who achieved immortal renown by denouncing his own Government for a new Government based on political rebellion against the powers that were.

However, had he been unsuccessful, there is no question that he would have been shot as a British traitor.

Had British arms been able to overcome our Fathers, signers of our own Declaration of Independence would have met merciless fate at the hands of British officialism, even as (1916) Irish leaders who fought the identical British foe, for our own identical reasons, perished martyrs to liberty.

¶ Well, what do you make out of words, then, for example such words as patriotism and war?

They borrow wholly as much from the character of the strife waged, and from the character of the leader. We are prone to look to the ultimate utility of a contest for its justification rather than defend the brute fact of the war in itself.

Therefore, be not surprised to learn that in the struggle for existence man, in his individual capacity, will lie and steal for advantage; yet the fiction is set up that Nations—which are after all is said but aggregations of men—exist to do good to the world.

We repeat, Nations will lie and steal; and there is no reason why we should be surprised. Why expect otherwise?

¶ The nature of the human animal is such that he will not yield his bone without a battle, and will in turn, whenever possible, take the bone from the other dog.

The politico-religious romance of the French Revolution, with its dreams of liberty, fraternity and equality were succeeded in short space by the iron hand of Napoleon, who found France a Republic and left it an Autocracy.

¶ Here in these United States we have long been wont to make our high historical brag of National solidarity, as against the world; but when the day comes that a man of consummate selfishness, executive and military

power sees his advantage, on that day a new history of these United States begins.

¶ You say that certain great politico-social facts are forever settled. You are in gross error.

Nothing is settled as long as there are two men and one woman on this earth, or two women and one man.

§ § §

¶ National boundaries will change and change again; creeds rise and fall, parties come and go, wealth be heaped up here or there only to be scattered far and wide.

In each generation, in the struggle of the human animal for supremacy, a new Cæsar storms the walls and sacks the city, which falls under the new supreme will.

A thousand times history informs us, soberly, that we have entered upon the Golden Age—but women continue to be seduced, children cry for bread, widows robbed, and fire and sword scourge the land.

We are disciples of "new" dogmas for age to age; again and again, we proclaim that in the future we see only good; and we throw out banners to the breeze and cry in the market-place, "At last we are done with wronging our brother!" We support the "new" dogmas with our very life's blood; we die on the battlefield in a species of delirium. The day of humanity, tolerance and liberty, will sweep away the old order of error, folly and prejudice.

¶ For the time being, doubt has no place in our minds.

§ § §

¶ When, for example, we read the "Rights of Man," as adopted by the Assembly, Aug. 26, 1789, in the first excitement of the French Revolution, we wonder that ideas so simple should have required the baptism of blood from lives by the tens of thousands.

¶ “Men,” it is affirmed, “are born and remain free and equal in rights. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescribable Rights of Man.

¶ “Those rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to opposition. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence, the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyments of equal rights. These limits can be determined best by law.”

§ § §

¶ What is there about all this that is not commonplace, dull, ordinary? Yet it was not to be attained without oceans of blood.

¶ Let us continue, more specifically.

¶ “No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned except in accordance with the forms of law. . . . The law shall provide such punishments as are strictly and obviously necessary. . . . No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, and the freedom of communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Each citizen may, accordingly, write, speak, and print with freedom. . . . All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or through their representatives, as to the necessity for taxes, and to know to what use these taxes are put. . . . ”

¶ What is there about all this that, were men reasonable, might not have been settled by common consent?

¶ Yet within ten years, that is to say November, 1799, when the Directory was overthrown, and Napoleon become Consul, there was little left to bear official witness to the Republic of “Equality!”

¶ Do not blame Napoleon. What he saw was an "opening" for a man of talents: and "opportunity" he conceived to be the basis of all properly constituted social order.

We have long made our brag of this Republic, "which is opportunity!"

¶ Napoleon regarded the philosophical dreams of Rousseau as those of a madman. Napoleon did not hold for one moment that the rallying cry "Liberty! Fraternity! Equality!" offered a practical basis for reconstructing society.

¶ After the turmoil and insecurity of the Revolution, there came an inherent yearning for stability and reassurance.

¶ "We must have eyes for what is practicable and real, in the application of principles, and not for the speculative and hypothetical," Napoleon solemnly declared, at one of the earlier sessions to his Council of State.

¶ And for the sake of France—such was his plea—he justified all his boundless cruelties.

¶ He set up the fiction that "all" he did was for "her good."

¶ He did not regret the excesses of the Revolution: the situation offered for a man of talent "a golden opportunity."

¶ And you would do the same if you were strong enough!

¶ Even to-day in your petty life you are forcing your advantages, making your private wars for self or power, seducing your women, lying, stealing, counting your gains, indulging your appetites, building your great castle on the hill, forcing your rivals to capitulate; and on the whole, are conducting yourself to advance your own ascendancy.

¶ History is the record of human nature, in action. In other words, it is the struggle for existence—war!

XV

WHAT O'CLOCK WITH THE WORLD?

¶ *Deceive yourself no longer . . . in our hypocrisies of history we are prone to represent that men's ways are to be transformed by so simple a spectacle as Six Joint High Commissioners, in black robes, seated in solemn conclave at the Hague . . . surrounded by mounds of books and papers . . . interpreting what henceforth shall be the political as well as the psychological basis of life.*

¶ But let us go into this thing with open eyes: not promising ourselves too much.

That our natural rivalries and animosities, making us love or hate or worship will be less manifest under Six High Commissioners in black robes, or green, or blue, or in all colors of the rainbow; or that the Six High Commissioners will be able by some new form of political or moral hypnotism to banish War . . as well say that you would consent to arbitrate an insult to your wife or child.

¶ Man wishes always to screen his real nature behind scrolls, parchments and enactments of various kinds, duly signed, sealed and delivered.

He will always tell you that he goes into the slums of the world with his armies and his protectorates, in order

to do good to the world; but it is, for example, questionable whether Britain would be in the Transvaal at this hour were the land a desert, and no diamond mines or gold-reefs there. . . . What think you?

Nay, do not disturb your tranquility; we have no wish to bring up controversial subjects: if you dislike the illustration, there are still others involving any other nation you may select, not excluding our own Republic.

§ § §

¶ Now about this war business, that is to say, your own business. Man wars on the animals and the animals war on each other: but the cruelest wars of all are those in which man wars on his own kind.

We talk of peace yet go on killing.

The noblest ideologist, walking down the street, dreaming of the Brotherhood, indifferently treads on tiny insects that chance to crawl over his path; and the swift-flying wheels of the automobile on the country road crush at unawares innocent black beetles or diligent ants, slowly trailing thru the dust.

¶ Everywhere, thruout this Earth, hour by hour, on every side, innumerable evidences proclaim the unceasing struggle.

Fittest is fittest, despite man's high-blown political alignments, professing to represent the upward march of humanity; among tigers, the tiger with sharpest claws; among eagles, the bird with tireless wings; but among men we know not what comprises fitness: for of a fact fitness has to do with the way an animal hunts its food, wins its mate, rears its young.

Even a dog does not always fight for his bone. There are times when he exercises what men call prudence. After a dog has starved long enough, his instinct tells him that the thing to do is to bury the surplus bone. He then

proceeds to do that very thing, guided by a sense of self-preservation.

¶ With man, self-protection takes range so wide that it includes miserliness, generosity, lying, stealing, truthfulness, hypocrisy, prayers, tears, dodging, fighting in the open: concealed as well behind the lover's kiss as behind the villain's curses.

Then, too, the military hero dies bravely in battle at noon, gaining imperishable renown as it is called, but the coward flinging away his sword and fleeing the field, extends his life from noon till six at night. This is only another way of saying that no act high or low is foreign to human nature. However vile or however glorious your conduct, you never cease to be a human being. We are common clay tho our ends are wide apart. Whether we pray or curse, we do not cease to be at war.

§ § §

¶ What, man at war when he prays? Impossible. . . . He is at peace, truly, at peace.

¶ It may well be that he seeks what he calls peace, but he is at war; war as to the state of his soul; war with the overbrooding night; with the grave that looms before him; with disease that has struck him down, disease he would exorcise with prayers told off, fast and faster still.

¶ The exquisite anguish of the Wars of Prayer exceed the agonies of the battlefield, with all its crimson gore in the long trenches: because agony is of the body, anguish of the spirit; and beyond the telling are the Wars of the Spirit, directed against a misspent life; against the ingratitude of those who should remember, or uttered to save an erring son or daughter; the sentiment that is behind the candle placed in the window, night after night, that the wandering boy may return; the sentiment that

has to do with endeavoring to console ourselves and to be meek in the forgetfulness of fathers for sons, sons for fathers; all too late, the long lonesome Wars of the Spirit, carried forth in the cloister, in the darkness, under the midnight stars, on the beach before the sea that replies only with a moan; these are the wars that whiten the face and kill the body which must, however, still live on and suffer to the end;—these frightful Wars of the Spirit, tho screened from the gaze of the sun, go on unceasingly around us, hour by hour; because of the brutish dispositions of men and man's satire on Brotherhood, thus far largely a vision and a dream. . . . And he who tells you that in the dim corner of the church where the women are praying before the shrine and the candles, in that lonesome spot with its spectral shadows and its ominous silence, he who tells you we repeat that in this place is peace, knows not the meaning of the human heart. He who prays is engaged in the long lonesome War of the Spirit, whose anguish is not reckoned in the number killed, missing or wounded—but by frightful solitudes, alone with his God.

§ § §

¶ Thus you see the folly of discussing War as an affair, exclusively, of cannon balls. Instead War, the thing in itself is deeply rooted in our very nature. Without being anything in particular, War is everywhere and always; it is not an expression of a definite thing but it sinks its roots deep in the subsoil of our common nature.

¶ War, we repeat, has thus no special face or form, system or reckoning. As we have just shown you, some of the greatest wars are unknown to historians, unsung by poets, unrecorded in brass or stone, but instead are engraved only in the secret recesses of the human heart . . . and if you doltishly insist that we cease speaking in rid-

dles and that your scientific mind requires objective evidences of "what" we refer to, then in God's name do so simple a thing as visit our churches, read our daily newspapers, look at our photoplays there in the semi-darkness alone with your conscience, or go out among your friends and try to number their scars, received in this peculiar business known as the Battle of Life . . . then, chastened by what you see and hear, no longer make a mock of the plain evidence brought to your brain.

§ § §

¶ Do you not admit it, in secret? Come now, all your life have you, yourself, not been seeking the sword that Fate has seemingly deprived you of? Surely there must be some special type of human power that you demand, some ambition to give or take, or do or dare; some great idea involving a struggle, to be gained only by pushing somebody out of your path . . . ? Come, be frank for once. Or, do you expect us to believe that your Manna fell from Heaven?

¶ "What" you represent is very simply told: fighting, loving, praying sum up man's career from sleep to sleep, and this regardless of your proud brag that you are more than a man in your intercourse with men; for you, too, no doubt have often felt yourself called on to make changes, affecting other men's lives, that is to say, to conquer your rival in love or business, or to drop a coin in the poor-box, or to endow a hospital—after you have enough left for yourself.

You made war to get your money; you arm yourself with a club to keep your property, otherwise, soon you will have no property to keep . . . or if you prefer to talk of reforming a drunkard or leading a sinner to salvation, even there a great War is on your hands, brother; else you fail miserably.

The struggles to support righteousness go on unceasingly and the battles against entrenched wrong call for the zeal of martyrs. . . . War, war everywhere, call it by what softer name you please.

§ § §

¶ Human life without war—what a strange idea, what a form of hypocrisy. Does man really believe it, and if so, how does he go about to prove it?

However, this is not to say that man does not change his style of giving battle.

While seemingly becoming less coarse in his warfare, he is in reality more barbarous; he utilizes the noblest inventions—wireless, aeroplane—to help murder more scientifically, by machinery.

¶ A hundred exquisite forms of butchery still exist in these United States.

Religious toleration is promised in the Constitution, but the preacher cannot stay unless he preaches the type of sermon we wish.

Political equality has been ordained a thousand times, but the war still goes on—and must go on!

Nations through their presidents, kings or parliaments proclaim on paper that they do exist to do good to mankind; and this in the face of their plain self-interests.

§ § §

¶ Mankind is always visiting the kept-historian and pays the nimble silver-piece the more readily in proportion as the spook promises riches, love, fame and fortune.

At the theatre, when at the supreme moment the villain makes a confession against himself, the audience gives a little gasp of astonishment. "What a great man he was, after all, an honest man!"

Val Jean, hearing that another is falsely accused in his stead, goes to Paris to give himself up, although he might

have kept away; and at the court scene, women weep and men stand aghast at the extraordinary picture—an honest man!

¶ What o'clock with the world? Is the sun as high in the heavens as we think, and are we on the march; or are we still asleep in our beds, our minds a bat's cave of dreams?

§ § §

¶ Why should we quarrel with man, for being man? These promises that man sets forth, on paper, these alleged peace-treaties, these protestations of undying friendship, between individuals or nations, should be regarded rightly as man's peculiar province in enacting his plain role of man;—that is to say, peculiar type of animal that gains prey by strategy, instead of fighting in the open. In this, man does not share the tactics of the bulldog. This noble dog springs to the attack without calling on God to bear witness to the justice of his cause.

The bulldog never sets forth that his wars are in the interest of humanity, but are frankly for the personal possession of the coveted bone.

The cat does not sit, hymn book in hand, singing beside the mouse's hole; but with instinctive and undisguised cunning she waits, breathless, hour after hour, murder in her heart.

These are forms of honesty that are foreign to man's nature; he has not claws like the cat nor jaws like the bulldog. For these weapons he substitutes writings in the form of hymns, treaties, and creeds that set forth with solemn protestation man's superiority to Nature in this, that man exists to do what he calls good to the world; and it follows that however grotesque his conduct—as a nation or an individual—he is always able to justify his deeds as inspired of the love of God.

¶ We see no reason why things should be otherwise ; it is too much to hope that man will ever make open confession against himself.

And for that matter, if we are to confide in our Father Confessor, note this peculiarity known to priests who have churches—out-of-the-way churches—near the depots of great cities where men and women come and go always in haste, leaving no trace behind.

These are the priests who hear the frightful heart-secrets of young women about to become mothers outside the law ; thieves, murderers, graveyard ghouls ; all manner of peculiar human animal types—claws, teeth, jaws, and bowels.

The woman, closely veiled, takes a long railroad journey, to find a safe confessional, thus strangely sought out.

In fifteen minutes, she is again on the train, her mind relieved that she had the courage to make a confession against herself.

¶ Thus, even in humility, man employs, in extreme cases, his cunning to prevent the plain fact becoming known—that he is a man and acted like a man !

The one thing that he will not do—man or nation—is to stand forth in all the stark realism of his estate.

¶ His prayer should read like this :

It is a glorious thing to be a man, and to live like a man, and to do like a man ;

I am a man ;

I seek my self-interest night and day ;

I live by plunder.

¶ These three things are of my estate since time began :

I hunt my woman ;

I kill my enemy ;

I worship my God.

¶ Let the world know the glad tidings.

XVI

BLOOD WILL TELL

¶ From the beginning, there never was a time when there was peace on this Earth, nor is there peace here and now. . . . Not the fact of War, but the way in which I make War, that is the question!

¶ We do not ask any man to believe what is here recorded simply because before his eyes is a pattern in printer's ink on a sheet of paper.

Believe it not, unless it comports with your experience in life and squares with your common sense.

¶ This we hold as fundamental: that what a man will do, depends on his breed.

¶ You have been for three days, without food or drink, lost in the Arizona desert. There are now only a few gulps of water left in your canteen. Your partner is at your side, also your dog.

Would you (come now, what say you), drink one swallow and hand over the canteen to your partner, that he might have his share, or would you gulp it all and let him perish?

¶ There are men who would divide the last drop of water, even in a burning desert, death hovering near; even give some to the dying dog.

However, there also are men who would drink it all,

stab the other man to death to prevent him from getting a share, later also killing and eating the dog.

¶ "What" you do, depends on your breed.

§ § §

¶ Not long ago, a party of gold-seekers, lost in the Alaskan wilderness, found themselves facing starvation. The food supply was perilously low; the game had left the mountains; the snows were deep; the trail was blind.

The men bound themselves by oath to try to live on quarter-rations, till a way out was found.

¶ It was not long, however, before in a most unaccountable way the food began disappearing in small quantities.

¶ Who was the guilty wretch? Suspicion ran through camp. Each man glowered at the other, murder in his heart; but there were no accusations: it was not to be settled that way.

A council was held and each starving gold-seeker swore a black oath, "I am not the guilty man!"

¶ On the fourth morning, a half-crazed miner, who had been dreaming of roast chicken, oysters and champagne, while slowly dying of cold and starvation, suddenly started in his sleep, and in that instant was as wide awake as though it were noon instead of pitch-black night.

By the dim light of the aurora raw and cold he saw something bulky and black, bending over the food-supply. At first he thought it was a wolf, but it was a man.

Before dawn, each morning, one of the party, while his companions slept, quietly slipped over to the food supply and secretly helped himself to part of the other men's share; then rolling himself in his blanket pretended to be asleep.

With an oath, the miner sprang from his blanket and sounded the alarm, catching the thief in the act!

¶ They decided to kill him, then and there!—stood him up against a lonesome pine!—and disregarding his pleas for mercy, fired fourteen shots!

In his unfair fight with hunger, the thief had showed the yellow—and lost. They left his carcass for wolves.

§ § §

¶ This one thing you can set down as the straight of it, proven since Time began: Soon or late, men find their level, high or low; soon or late, the yellow streak will show . . . soon or late, by the wilderness campfire, or in the Arizona desert, we get our trial.

What if it should turn out that you are the man lost in the desert, the one who murders his companion in order to get for himself the last drop of water in the canteen . . . ? Or, if not you, might I not be that man myself . . . ? Who knows what tests you or I may yet be called on to withstand, in spite of all our present high moral brag? How do I know that I would stand the test . . . ?

Or, what if it should turn out that you, poor miserable dying devil, are the one who under cover of night filches the crumbs to keep your belly warm, whilst your mates are dying of starvation and cold, in the Alaskan wilderness back of Nome . . . ? Or, if not you, might I not be the man, myself . . . ? Who knows?

For in the last lone fight with death, the great primal law of hunger is supreme; stronger than laws of man defining property rights; stronger than law of God which says, "Thou shalt not kill!"

¶ About all we can hope is this: That as Time passes, little by little men will see that since fight we must it is better to fight fair: but the full realization of this hope is at present largely an iridescent dream. Still, it is a hope and a promise for a better day.

As long as there are human yellow dogs, so long will the yellow streak remain: how long it will take to breed it out, or if it can be bred out, no man on this Earth to-day is wise enough to know.

And, in the meantime, this one thing you can set down as the straight of it, proven true since Time began: soon or late, men find their level, high or low; soon or late, the yellow streak will show; you get your trial, soon or late;—and how you will face it remains to be seen.

XVII

THE CELESTIAL BIOGRAPH

*Wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn
In short and musty straw?*

¶ Says the steward to Kent in King Lear, "What dost thou take me for?" And Kent answers:

¶ "A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats, a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave; a glass-gazing superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave—"

¶ And that is not all. It is only a part of what Kent says.

¶ So it will be with the new type of history, as against the old: it will all come out of the Great War, and it is for you to say, not me, how great the gain will be; at least we will have a chance to improve by study, for we will no longer flatter ourselves to death.

¶ It is easily possible for a Nation to vaunt itself proud, at the same time secretly hoveling with swine, in the dirty straw.

The great War of 1914 has brought this gloriously home, even to the dullest onlooker.

¶ As one of the beneficent results of the European War, may it not come to pass that, scorning the high brags of

history-mongers, the world will demand henceforth that the thing to do in the history-scribble is to put man in the record, not leave him out; nor yet to adorn his brow with a golden circlet, while finding him living in a swine-sty.

¶ We have talked much of this history-thing, as writ, but there now comes to mind this ultimate test:

Before me like a dream rises the episode called the Last Day, whereon free from flatteries man is to be judged.

He is to be judged not as he imagines he is, nor as he would like to appear, nor as he has been in the habit of parading himself, thru the kindness of his history-mongers: but as he is, in that way is he to be judged.

We shall then and then only discern clearly the immense gulf between life as secretly lived by men, and as recorded by men in their special records called history and biography. . . .

¶ And on this Last Day, this one honest day that we refer to, high in the clouds the assembled hosts take their places in the vast aerial amphitheatre, before their startled eyes the gigantic Celestial Screen.

On this mirror first is flashed man's account of himself as set forth in prose, poem and triumphal arch.

Then the trumpet blows and man's pitiful pretenses in his histories fade away, followed by stern reality, as against mortal mockeries . . . flashing across the canopy of Heaven, before the speechless multitudes, there suddenly shine forth individual living pictures judging in turn all mortals here below, likewise all nations; showing exactly what you did from the cradle to the grave; and what I did; and my neighbor did; and what this woman did and what that woman did: so the records of the Nations of the earth, as against their historical hypocrisies.

¶ In fast-flying Celestial scroll, surpassing in marvelous detail all records of man's invention here and now one by one, man for man, woman for woman, are judged in naked moral realism: covering thus the human race, depicting on the Celestial Screen this earth-life, in all its secret recesses, as contrasted with man's high flatteries in favorite histories and biographies. . . . Each of us has his turn and no man's life is spared nor any Nation's life.

§ § §

¶ Do you think you could find words strong enough to express the bottomless gulf between our conventional human records, in books, for humans to read about themselves, and the astonishing revelations of the Celestial Biograph, unrolling there in all its naked realism, amidst the frozen silence of the earth's hosts, each man in a paroxysm of terror awaiting the moment when his own name shall be called, and his individual photo-play flashed in gigantic outlines before the eyes of the world-hosts, covering every secret act of his life as against his cloak of worldly pretense and pious protestation . . . ?

¶ "For one, I hope it will never come to pass. No all-merciful! God could do anything so cruel. . . . Is it not a monstrous idea?" I hear a voice.

What you really mean, brother, in asking me if it is not a monstrous idea, is this: Your thought is another of the inherent hypocrisies with which man surrounds his heart's secrets.

¶ Yes, indeed, it is a monstrous idea, brother—that men should ever be forced to look on the truth about themselves.

XVIII

WHAT THEN IS "HISTORY"?

The search for evidences of "manifest destiny, in the history of nations, is a favorite pastime of history-mongers; the paradox wherein the human masquerades as superhuman.

¶ That a spiritual by-product flows from the life of the individual to exalt the life of the community; that this influence is more than nominal, remaining even after the individual, as for example political teacher, has vanished from the earthly scene; and that, crystallized into National ideals, this immaterial by-product goes forward from generation to generation;—such is the earnest belief of thousands of Americans to-day.

Not only Americans in America, but Germans in Germany, Britons in the Isles, Celts in France, and Tartars in Russia.

¶ In America, some tell us, we are endeavoring to give serious unity to that particular conception of political brotherhood known as "democracy," and hence are intolerant of a line of kings—in the fond hope that we may each be our individual king.

¶ Also, that we do indeed move with God's guidance. Millions of Americans thus hold to the political dogma that the voice of the people is the voice of God.

¶ The question is, Can our history be thus truthfully represented?

To prove or disprove these allegations of manifest destiny it becomes necessary to leap a wide gulf.

We must demonstrate that every-day, nominal conduct, once crystallized in customs, adhered to by large groups of men, becomes by that very form of ancientism something superhuman. Are we ready to accept this belief after a close scrutiny of our social ideals?

§ § §

¶ Do not forget that the black drop in our history has made wholly as much, historically, as has the red drop.

¶ Fighting, loving, praying—eating, drinking, feeling. What does it all mean, or does it mean anything we can find out, by “historical” methods?

Are we prepared to prove, for example, that man's life is of exceedingly great importance, as against that of all other animals?

Has man any immunity from accident not shared by a dog?

¶ Were man's high boast true, would we choose the ends that come?

Would one deliberately cross the street, to be run down by a fast-flying automobile?

Would another elect to put his funds in a bank that the cashier wrecks by speculation?

Would one select ptomain as a dressing for his fish?

Would another bid his friends good-bye, to take passage on an ill-starred Titanic, whose bow crashes into an iceberg?

¶ To be born, to struggle, to grow, to suffer, to decay, and finally to die—such is the common fate.

§ § §

¶ Man is always passing; time is always staying.

¶ What, then, is history?

History is the record of human nature, in action; a never-ending series of coronations and crucifixions; yet there are men who survey this picture of chaos and tell you with great earnestness that it is all "leading to an appointed end."

¶ We have no science of human nature: we know the intimate lives of bees, butterflies and wolves; but the human heart, though only a foot away, remains largely unknown. Must it be forever?

¶ Man jealously stores up, in books, his progress in the arts and sciences, ever building wider temples on the ruins of the past.

But with whole libraries freighted with "human nature," as set forth in histories, dramas, sermons, novels, and in newspapers, the list does not include a working knowledge of "human character," except in gross form.

¶ The plain truth is that while man is slowly conquering the earth, the air and the sea, he knows no more of "human nature" than he did in the days of the Mummy. Man explores Africa, seeks the Pole, charts the millions of stars, and reads the history of the Universe in a grain of sand.

In invention, he is in truth a new Creator—not yet, however, realizing the full force of the Scriptural injunction, "A new Heaven and new Earth," but in a very real sense building his own heaven and earth.

Through the brain of Science man wrests Nature's secrets from her, one by one, and reconstructs out of the debris of the Past a temple of Progress grander than any known of olden days.

¶ At the same time, the human heart, though only a foot away, is practically unexplored, and its true history is known only in shadowy glimpses.

It is, in short, not too much to say that men know all things, except themselves.

§ § §

¶ Man certainly knows more of bees and ants than he does of his fellow kind.

Scientists who have thought deeply on ants can tell you what an ant will do throughout its entire life; but the wisest man cannot say what any human being will do, even tomorrow.

¶ In your own case, do you know what test you will be called to meet tomorrow, and how you will front it?

For one man is foolish, another wise; one is prudent, another a spendthrift; one is an invalid, another surly and bigoted, despised even by his own family;—and thus the types multiply.

And some men scatter gifts as they go, while other men are always looking around to collect toll.

§ § §

¶ In some far off time, man may yet come to know his own brother—the man at his elbow!—and great will be the wisdom thereof, and great the rejoicing in the land. Should the white dawn ever break when there is wider human understanding between the top and the bottom of society, the basis of true progress on this earth is at hand. The criminal and the judge, the master and the servant, the shepherd and the king, the drunkard, the thief and the glutton, the leper and the athlete, will be found of identical mortal dust; each in some special sense brave, free and strong—if each could be made to understand.

XIX

THE ROGUE'S MARCH

The stupendous cannonading along European trenches finds deadly parallel in shot and shell now crashing thru the human mind, the world over, riddling our most cherished Mumblings expressed in History and Biography, as related before the Great War. Therein, what virtues did we not measure, taking us at our own word! The dialogue here following has for its sole purpose the implied suggestion of wider study: ground that is not plowed brings forth no harvest. Likewise, the Great War should not be allowed to come and go without warning us that History as heretofore written has on the whole been a curse and not a help to us, has tricked us with extravagant expectations founded often enough on fraudulent intent and in flat rejection of human nature; and being told in deliberate disregard of plain lessons of experience, quite naturally must always end in disappointment.

¶ Was all this glory real, that we read about before the Great War? This interdenominationalism, internationalism, and all the other isms? . . . this hands-across-the-sea business? . . . those ideals of brotherhood based on politico-religious idealism? . . . that brag about "surer" religious freedom under one flag than under another?

. . . this guaranteeing something, we know not what, under one Nation rather than under another?

¶ And we freighted shelves with books mountains high, wherein we proclaimed our vainglorious ideals of the sawdust brotherhood, now alas gone to smash.

¶ War is a merciless revealer of individual as well as National shams and quackeries; and if therefore all the peculiar moral glories of which we prated in the smug Nineteenth Century were not real, then who was responsible for the telling, and what the motive behind the deception? Why should man wish to trick himself as to "what" he represents? If, however, the scribblings were realities, likewise the mumblings of brotherhood, they must still be real, tried by promise against performance. . . ?

¶ Or was it all merely some trumped-up thing, some glittering befoolment composed of politico-religio dingle-dangles manufactured to bolster up the conventional lies of a conventional world? Alas, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, nay not excluding that proud classification Greater Britain Overseas, alas, too, America, in spite of thy kept-writers and their denials—

Wast thou fain, poor father,

To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn

In short and musty straw?

§ § §

¶ *Surprising as it may seem to honest folk, this square-headed rascalion Greusel stands his ground, even after "I" pointed out to him the absurdity of his new-fangled history-thing: stuck to it that, henceforth in writing about Great Personages or Nations the test should be not how great they were, but how low they sunk. . . . Fi!*

¶ *Didst ever hear of crank so crazed? Everything worth while that ever was in the world is still with us, say I!*

¶ *Greusel's idea seems to be, in general, that if a man knows his faults there is a fighting chance that with patience and discipline he may correct them, but certainly will not improve—if flattered to death. All very promising on paper, to be sure, but we live in a "practical" world and should sustain as far as possible the Settled Order, don't you think?*

¶ *May I cut in by remarking, as known to all honest men, that we have long been endeavoring to standardize our Civilization as it were, to certify to our babies, our pure milk, our wives, our daughters, nay by Heavens to our optimism and to our very patriotism. Read the President's Message; and would his Excellency ask blessings if we were not a Chosen People and had not kept the Commandments?*

§ § §

¶ On the other hand, in all decency, should not "history" be bulwarked on men's ways? Why not begin now by writing a new type of history by putting man in, instead of by keeping him out and imagining what he ought to do and say? History is neither more nor less than human nature in action, the record of life as it is.

¶ Hence, with Nations as with individuals, it is well not to make too many promises if we expect to keep them. . . . Omit no faults, frailties or obsessions, include also a few paragraphs on such feeble virtues as man displays at long intervals, in his brief and troubled journey across the track of Time. This at least would provide a type of history from which we would not need back down; the other kind turned out to be poor stuff; we closed our eyes to our hoveling with swine and exalted our virtues to the skies; coming at least to believe we are a Chosen People, and that our very historical mock- heroics are ordained of God. . . .

¶ One does not need an Old Testament imagination composed of frightful wraths and worlds crashing to destruction in hell-fires, to realize that our old-time accounts of ourselves in our pet histories were mighty failures as records of humans. All is now shot to pieces, along with the 5,000,000 dead that do fill the trenches. . . . For mark you, the Great War has forced us to face in all its nakedness the world in which we live, making sudden and stupendous end, in flashes of dynamite, to those last historical rags of pride wherewith we were wont to flaunt ourselves and proclaim our brags and our conceits; now have we naught to cloak our bodies with, from the winter's storms. . . . The expulsion of our First Parents from the Garden has been exemplified anew.

§ § §

¶ *From this point the mountebank, with brazen effrontery, tries to make us believe that what we call history instead of being quite naturally something to support our pride, our individual as well as National dignity, should on the contrary be something entirely different. I blush to tell you how this churl carries on! All I can make out of it is that he must have been fed on sour milk, in his youth; that he idled away his time wandering from place to place without visible means of support, as it seems, with a term or two at the rock pile now and then to break his spirit; that quite naturally he came to the place where he now eyes all honest men with suspicion; trying with his damned innovations to affront and insult us, and to undermine our faith in all the good things historians have been put to so much pains to tell about us, in days gone by.*

¶ *I quote his vile speech not because I believe a word of it, but that you may see how madness tilts the brain, in war-times.*

¶ Nay, make no grievous error; what we have heretofore lived by we live by no more; our smug moralities have found us out; the game is ended; the score is chalked where all may read; the moving hand has written. . . . For we built ourselves a beautiful Garden of Lies, and called it our Garden of Eden. And we invented our pignotrough history, representing ourselves as an angel with a revolver in its hand; and we learned to look on it as something good, to go by, and to live by. . . . Men talk of "history," as tho it were some profoundly unattainable record reserved only for year-long search by students pouring thru the archives, but the simple Old Testament borrows a tremendous advantage over all the books man writes and calls histories; for the Old Testament is the only history in which man is called to his face hypocrite, liar and thief. . . . And man, reading these plain words, marvels at them and not wishing to make a confession against himself, replies that such extraordinary utterances must be inspired, the judgment of a super-man, yea of God; for man in all the mountains of history in which he has told his own tale, has never been frank enough to look at himself as he is; still does he need a sacrifice to let him, personally, go free. And when suddenly confronted with himself as he is, in all his moral nakedness, as revealed by the Great War, he deplotes that he has been driven out of his Eden, which is only another way of saying from his Garden of Lies. . . . At this solemn moment, stript of his last rags of historical self-praise, with five millions of his brothers lying around him in death agonies, this peculiar animal, otherwise known as man, is now standing naked before his fellow-kind in acknowledged self-distrust of all the old lies by which once he was wont to fool himself. It cannot longer be concealed that the eye of the eagle sees more than the

eye of the groveling toad. Is he tired of being a toad and now longs to be an eagle? . . .

§ § §

¶ *I wish to make perfectly clear that in no wise do I endorse these ravings; they seem to be such as one might best hear in Bloomingdale. . . . Let us be sensible: this is a "practical" world; we have to live in it; we have to have something to live by, that is a fact; we must believe something, so why not the best, as it were? Are our Great Historical Personages to be made a mock of? The writer's theory is perfectly anarchistic, to wit, that in writing history we should put man in the story as he is. Now I protest this is going too far. No honest father cares to place before his growing daughter certain facts as to what sort of fellow he is, or was; there are certain National peculiarities, also, that no conservative historian can dwell on and expect to hold the good will of his fellow-citizens. Fill it in to suit yourself. . . . The rights of the Settled Order should come first, I protest. History should not be a spying-glass or tell-tale such as they have in the Philadelphia upper-flats, to peek up and down the street; nay, history should instead be a cloak to cover our scars and to make us look dignified and charming. Why God himself in the Garden made our First Parents put on something. . . . I trust I do not misquote history? My mind is so upset by this damned nonsense of a new historical-thing! Pardon my bold language, friends.*

§ § §

¶ In plain words, we have long been writing history in such a way that, in effect, it has become a sort of glorified Rogue's March, wherein man has deliberately presented himself as a poseur.

¶ This dastardly form of historical quackery is now,

thank God, becoming more and more difficult to sustain, and is rapidly playing out. The Great War has forced us to revise our pretensions and to return to earth.

¶ For the first time in centuries man will now have a genuine opportunity to look at himself not as he thinks he ought to be, but as he is, as a human animal; and it will be increasingly difficult for him henceforth to enact the poseur and the demi-god. The great question is, Is he satisfied with the picture he presents . . . ?

§ § §

¶ Greusel coins a peculiar phrase to characterize the conventional reserve of history. He brazenly calls history, as writ, a "sort of glorified Rogue's March," by which he undoubtedly means that we are all more or less scoundrels, and were justice done, "Few would escape the whipping post." To this I reply: There is a law of propriety, as between gentlemen, and in my opinion it is all tommyrot to go about inquiring where this or that Great Personage got his money, or to number the devious political ways in which any Nation (not excluding our own America) gained first rank on land or on sea. The President assures us in his Messages that we are a Chosen People; and besides, I think that honest men are agreed that the world is quite well off as it is; and no new-fangled ideas of history-writing should offend our American sensibilities. Let us sustain things as they are! The Settled Order, with our system of Certified and Standardized things! Our landed estates, our interest, bond and mortgage accounts, our happy homes! Yes, under Heaven, I do solemnly proclaim that our very soup kitchens, our foundlings' homes, our prisons, are in themselves evidences of humane efforts to make things better; and I, for one, see no reason why they should be attacked, or exposed. . . . We do not expect our sons to be saints,

of course; but why speak of it, why dwell on it, why rasp on it, why harp on it? Let it be widely known that the virtues have their place in the lives of eminent Americans; it is elevating to the youth of the land, all this report of virtue, even tho some of the National stuff be a bit spurious, to be sure. . . . In short, in the olden days—the good old days!—a rogue got three months for soliciting alms without authority; or for pretending to read the palm, or the stars; or for deserting his wife and leaving the child on the parish;—and now let us add that a similar penalty ought to obtain for the scribbler (I will not term him an historian), who would make a mock of the Settled Order. It should be a prison offence for any writer to reveal the secret ways in which a Great Personage or a Great Nation came forward in worldly wealth or honors. Yes, indeed! Fi, fi, say I to the contrary-minded!

§ § §

¶ Few men hate themselves enough to tell the truth about their secret motives; men fear truth, fleeing as tho from the plague, nay become panic-stricken when face to face with those supreme moments in which Truth is announced as about to open the door.

Yea, mark the solemn hush in court when the judge asks with an air of ominous foreboding:

¶ “Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed on your verdict?”

¶ “We have, your honor.”

¶ “And what say you, guilty or not guilty?”

¶ Thus in all the crises of life, moments of supreme revelation are moments of frozen silence, as tho the human heart stood still at the very thot of justice.

Fearing to face the plain facts as we know them in secret places, man sets up his many imaginations to pre-

sent self-interest in the guise of patriotism, glory, honor, or virtue.

Behold the scoundrel, borrowing robes of righteousness to help him in his fight to overcome virtue: observe too the Nation, setting out to play the blackguard, proclaim always that her intrigues of politics are high and holy rites supported by religion and annointed of God.

¶ Man is a peculiar animal, and one of the strangest things about him is his habit of pretending to look at the stars while in reality groveling in the pit.

He calls black, white; up, down; East, West; cruelty, mercy; ill-will, charity; prejudice, toleration; and death, life.

What peculiar something in his mad brain is gratified enormously by this final mental obsession wherein man refuses even to be honest with himself?

¶ Man, as long as he can eat in secret, knows no shame. Therefore, his pride is immensely gratified by inventing what he terms the truth of history, wherein by vast industry, thru endless scribblings, thru parchments, treaties, and even by legends on tombs: in all these ways and in all these places, man's conception of honesty with himself is to try to present himself as he is not. . . .

Likewise multitudes plunder in the name of law, all the time evoking the majesty of justice; and still other multitudes use the name religion to gain by trafficking in human ignorance; and there are yet multitudes that while publicly upholding abstract principles of brotherhood secretly are as buzzards living on dead flesh.

If the prostitute would no longer make pretense of virtue . . . if the statesman would no longer insist that he lives to do good to others . . . if the news-monger would no longer cry in the market-place that he is the one true friend of the people . . . if the convict would admit that

he is guilty . . . if the judge would rise in court and call to the multitude that he has trafficked in justice . . . or if the leader of the new religion would, from his pulpit, some morning openly confess that it was all a fake and a sham . . . !

From that moment of self-revelation, wherein man would no longer make mock and ill-omen of his higher self, man would no longer need call on God to support his feeble virtues, nor dream of some imaginary Kingdom of Righteousness afar, for indeed would the larger life be very close at hand.

“I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all opposition and shame:

I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate:

I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the tremendous seducer of young women:

I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted to be hid, I see these sights on the earth.

I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs and prisoners:

I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like:

All these, all the meanness and agony without end, I, sitting, look out upon. . . .”

¶ And now we must bring this Rogue’s March book to a sudden close. The hour is growing late, the candle is dimming fast as it sputters in its socket, with our task still before us! Here, then, we bid you farewell.

¶ It is for your common sense to remind you now, with sadness, to what extent we have shown that man has made himself the pitiful victim to words instead of faith.

We mumble words in our histories and biographies, words in the market-place, words in our prayers;—and still the human carnival goes on.

There is the word patriotism.

It has been used since Time began—to cover buccanneering expeditions whose naked object is murder and plunder.

We have also the high-sounding words love, religion, property, business enterprise, statesmanship, humanity. And of all these words, it is a question whether the truth has ever been told thru the unending procession of the centuries: and taking men at their own valuation thru their acts, is it indeed to be expected that the day will yet come when men clearly understand the real definition of these words?

¶ Truth, the Eternal Magdalen, made what she is by the brutish impositions of men, has for many long years hidden her face in the market-place, awaiting a new race of men to set her free.

¶ How much longer must she wait?

THE END

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